

**Practice and performance: EU Diplomacy in
Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus after the
inauguration of the European External Action
Service, 2010-2015**

DOCTORAL THESIS

by

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to critically assess the diplomatic performance of the European Union (EU) in its neighbourhood, namely in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus after the inauguration of the European External Action Service (EEAS). The Lisbon Treaty announced the need for a stronger, more efficient, more coherent EU in world politics. This implied, inter alia, that in third countries, the former Commission representations have been transformed into Union Delegations that represent the EU. Besides this, the Treaty changes opened an opportunity for coordination between national and EU level diplomacy in order to obtain a more effective collective effort. These changes were focused on EU's overall performance, which has been a salient issue on the agenda of European policy-makers. The issue of the EU's performance in the 'wider Eastern Europe' remains poignant, not least because of current developments in its 'neighbourhood' (such as the crisis in Ukraine, Moldova's downturn in its democratization efforts or the inclusion of Belarus on the list of most repressive countries in the world).

While the Brussels-based part of the EEAS has captured the attention of both academic and non-academic literature, this thesis turns its focus to the performance and diplomatic practice of the EU in third countries, i.e. Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. When talking about European diplomatic performance abroad, a key focus in the thesis is on practices through which the details of everyday practices that form and shape the performance of any actor is explored. In order to do so, the investigation conducted for this research is guided by three assumptions on the use of EU diplomacy in overcoming its foreign policy dilemmas. Looking at performance, then, implies examining EU diplomatic practices against pre-set goals; evaluating the cooperation between member-states (MS) embassies and Union Delegations towards formulating and implementing a 'common approach'; and, conducting a screening of diplomatic capabilities on the ground.

Findings show that the EU delegations represent the EU as a whole, became communication hubs on the ground and took the lead on cooperation with the EU MS' embassies. Empirical evidence revealed that, in practice, the Delegations continued to conduct aid-driven diplomacy, as a legacy from the former Commission representations. And, that the coexistence of national and EU diplomacy was marked, at times, by MS opting out of the common approach in favour of parallel actions. While the Delegations in these countries have grown in size and, most importantly, have diplomats as staff members; the development of the Delegations also came with an intra- and inter-institutional tension on the ground that echoed Brussels institutional dynamics. Lastly, a comparative evaluation of EU diplomatic performance in Eastern Europe more generally uncovered multistakeholder diplomacy, burden-sharing, bloc diplomacy, unilateral diplomatic actions and interest-driven diplomacy as key drivers and dividers in EU's attempt to address its foreign policy dilemmas.

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List of Acronyms

AA	Association Agreement
AGORA	European Commission's online system for planning and organising meetings
AP	Action Plan (ENP Action Plan)
BELMED	International Accreditation of Testing Laboratories for Medical Products and support to healthcare in Belarus project
Benelux	A politico-economic union of three neighbouring states: Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CoE	Council of Europe
COEST	Working Party on Eastern Europe and Central Asia
COREPER	Committee of the Permanent Representatives of the Governments of the Member States to the European Union
COREU	Abbreviation from French: CORespondance EUropéenne. It represents the EU communication network between the 28 EU countries, the Council, the EEAS and the Commission
CS	Civil society
CSDP	The Common Security and Defence Policy
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement
DG DevCo	Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (European Commission)
DG Relex	The Directorate-General for the External Relations (European Commission)
DG Trade	Directorate General for Trade (European Commission)
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EEAS	European External Action Service

ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ENPI	European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument
ERASMUS	EU exchange student programme
Erasmus Mundus	Cooperation and mobility programme in the field of higher education (exchange for students from EU and third countries)
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
EUD/EUDs	EU Delegation(s)
EUSR	European Union Special Representatives
FP7	Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (EU instrument for funding research in Europe)
FRONTEX	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
FSJ	Freedom, Security, Justice
GAERC	General Affairs and External Relations Council
GSP	EU's Generalised scheme of preferences
HoD	Head of Delegation
HoM(s)	Head of Mission
HoS	Head of Section
HR or HR/VP	High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	International Relations
MATRA	The Dutch Fund for Regional Partnerships
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOST	Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People-Contacts, Belarus
MS	Member-state(s)

NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NIP	National Indicative Programme
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
RELOAD	Support to regional and local development in Belarus programme
RQDA	Qualitative Data Analysis software
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SNEs	Seconded National Experts
TACIS	Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States
TAIEX	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument
TCA	Trade and Cooperation Agreement
Tempus	Programme which supports the modernisation of higher education in the Partner Countries of Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean region
TEU	Treaty on European Union
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
TWINNING	European Union instrument for institutional cooperation between Public Administrations of EU Member States and of beneficiary or partner countries
UN	United Nations
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Chapter 1. Introduction

The European Union (EU) today has a strong presence in the international arena – it is the third largest grouping in the world in terms of population, counting almost 500 million; it generates one quarter of global wealth and 50% of global Overseas Development Assistance originates in Europe. It aims at a leading role in such areas as exporting democratic standards to its neighbours or in combating climate change. Via its established network of Delegations, the EU maintains relations with almost all countries in the world. Although the EU's presence in world politics is uncontested, its capacity to influence the external world, i.e. the EU's actorness remains an area of research interest (Allen & Smith, 1990; Bretherton & Vogler, 2006; Smith, 2006; Zielonka, 2011). The aim of a stronger and more coherent European Union has been reinforced with the Lisbon Treaty (European Council, 2007) with the introduction, *inter alia*, of the European External Action Service (EEAS). The creation of the EEAS and the upgrade to Union Delegations on the ground can be seen as an innovation of this last Treaty in the sense that it increases the visibility of the EU and raises its profile in international affairs (Lloveras Soler, 2011). With a ring of instability that surrounds the EU from the Eastern Europe to the Caucasus, the Middle East and the Horn of Africa, European diplomacy is in great demand and perennial questions regarding EU (diplomatic) performance arise.

The 2013 review of the EEAS¹ highlighted as one of the strengths the enhanced partnership with the member-states, and the 2015 EEAS strategic planning review² emphasized that against the background of the challenges in the neighbourhood EU diplomacy should seize the opportunity for coordination between national and EU level in order to obtain a more effective collective effort. In third countries, the former Commission representations have been transformed into Union Delegations that amount today to circa 139 Delegations and Offices, representing the European Union and maintaining relations with single countries, groups of countries and with international organisations (Austermann, 2014; Baltag & Smith, 2015; Drieskens, 2012). Similar to the EEAS, the Union Delegations are staffed, in different

¹ The full text of the EEAS 2013 Review can be accessed here:
https://eeas.europa.eu/library/publications/2013/3/2013_eeas_review_en.pdf

² The full text of the EEAS Strategic Review 'The European Union in a changing global environment' (2015) can be consulted here: <https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/en/strategic-review-european-union-changing-global-environment>

departments, with a mixture of personnel from the EEAS, the Commission, but also local employees. Similar to member-state (MS) embassies, EU Delegations are tasked with traditional diplomatic functions: to represent the EU as well as explain and implement its foreign policy. Outside Brussels, the EU's diplomatic capacity remains represented by member state embassies and the EU delegations (now under the EEAS). It is the latter two that represent the EU diplomatic actors in third countries. With the inauguration of the EEAS, the Union Delegations and member-state actors are expected to cooperate, exchange information and contribute to formulating and implementing the 'common approach'³. Through policies such as the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) the EU works with its neighbours to the East and South to foster security, stability and prosperity - work that is being done also through the activity of its diplomatic actors on the ground.

The emphasis on good performance is a recurrent theme in the EU's policies, treaties and strategies that highlight the need for an enhanced coherence, internal coordination, coupled with projecting more efficiently the EU's values and interests externally (Commission, 2013, 2014a). Diplomacy, understood as the practice of diplomacy, first of all, refers to the means by which actors pursue their foreign policies (Berridge, 2015) implying 'the management of relations between actors' (Barston, 2013). The focus on diplomacy therefore draws attention to the way and manner in which the EU conducts its foreign affairs with other actors, i.e. third states or other groupings. Taking into account that the EU and its member-states often share legal competence in the area of foreign policy, it is important to shift the research focus to developments post-Lisbon and to understand how and whether the changes brought about have had an impact on EU diplomatic performance. This means that any discussion about EU diplomatic actorness is closely linked with the focus on performance and diplomatic practice.

This becomes even more relevant now that the EU's institutional design has acquired the EEAS which "will help strengthen the European Union on the global stage, give it more profile, and enable it to project its interests and values more efficiently" (EEAS, 2016, para 3). For EU diplomacy specifically, the introduction of the EEAS reinforces the aim of a stronger, more efficient and coherent European

³ Art. 32 of the Lisbon Treaty stipulates that both the MS embassies and the Delegations "shall cooperate and shall contribute to formulating and implementing the *common approach*" in third countries

Union since the unification of the diplomatic efforts of the European Commission, the Council Secretariat and that of the EU member states is embraced. Subsequently, in third countries, EU diplomatic performance, represented by the EU delegations and MS embassies, is of key importance to research. The need for reform in EU diplomacy pre-Lisbon related to the coexistence of EU and MS diplomacy with parallel rather than coherently intertwined direction: issues related to institutional competencies and diplomatic representation abroad; institutional as well as national and EU level power struggles; and general confusion regarding leadership in diplomatic activity on the ground just to name a few (Baltag, 2018; Smith, Keukeleire & Vanhoonacker, 2016; Telò & Ponjaert, 2016; Baltag & Smith, 2015; Petrov, Vanhoonacker & Pomorska, 2012; Smith, 2013a, Smith, 2013b). In this sense, the Lisbon Treaty introduced a number of changes to EU diplomacy in Brussels and on the ground: the EU acquired legal personality; there was established a single institutional framework for external relations; Delegations were taken under the authority of the High Representative (HR/VP) with the Heads of Delegations coming from the EEAS; Delegations took over the functions of the rotating Presidency, and were tasked with working out the relations between national and EU diplomatic representations abroad⁴.

While the EEAS captures the attention of both academic and non-academic literature, the development of the relationship between the EU and national diplomatic services in neighbour countries has received less attention (Austermann, 2012; Austermann 2014; Hanses & Schaer, 2012; Drieskens, 2012; Baltag & Smith, 2015; Baltag, 2018). The issue of coordination between EU diplomatic actors in neighbour countries is not uncontested. At the end of 2011 this issue was addressed through the joint letter of the Foreign Ministers of several member states⁵ to the EEAS which encouraged the optimization of the EU Delegations (EUDs) and MS embassies cooperation and communication infrastructure in order to improve the coherence of EU external action (Eurotradeunion, 2011). In practice member states have been reluctant or cautious in embracing the new setting of cooperation in pursuing their foreign policy objectives (Blockmans, 2012; Comelli & Matarazzo, 2011; Petrov, Pomorska, & Vanhoonacker, 2012). Research emphasizes that EU

⁴ See TEU, art 4.3.

⁵ Belgium, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden.

performance remains constrained by member states' willingness to cede competences in one issue area or another or by a clear lack of a unified position (Baltag & Smith, 2015; Van Schaik, 2013; Blavoukos & Bourantonis, 2011; Blockmans, 2012). Therefore this thesis taps into the specific post-Lisbon aspect of EU diplomatic actorness, questioning the EU's diplomatic performance abroad and, in particular, the dynamics of the practice of EU diplomacy exercised by MS embassies and EU delegations.

1.1. Research questions and Focus

The aim of the thesis is to critically assess EU diplomatic performance in its immediate neighbourhood in the East (Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus). The general research question guiding this research, namely '*To what extent has the EU developed as a successful diplomatic actor since the inauguration of the EEAS?*', is not a simple question and does not necessarily translate into a simple answer. The development of the EU diplomatic system post-Lisbon comes rather as an example of challenging the traditional actorness and practice of diplomacy; hence the answer is anything but simple. Therefore, the lead research question requires detailed examination through addressing the following sub-questions:

- How does one study the success of EU diplomacy?
- How does the EU conduct/perform its diplomatic relations in third countries since the inauguration of the EEAS?
- How has the Lisbon innovation in diplomacy been manifested on the ground and has it addressed the main pre-existing challenges?

To answer the overarching questions that guide this thesis, three performance criteria are designed: effectiveness, relevance and capabilities. Acknowledging the difficulties of examining performance, the three criteria are operationalised through linking, in the analytical framework, organizational studies, EU international actorness studies, the practice of diplomacy and the practice turn in international relations (IR) and EU studies. In its analysis, the thesis addresses a number of criticisms raised pre-Lisbon regarding European diplomatic cooperation, such as: lack of leadership, questions concerning representation and hence, the issue of

continuity and coherence between EU and MS in three Eastern European countries: Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. Especially when in third countries the consolidation of the EU's system of diplomacy relies not solely on Union Delegations, but also on MS embassies; and since the Treaty⁶ foresees the cooperation between the two, the thesis uncovers the particularities of the practices of European diplomatic cooperation among EU delegations and national embassies in these three Eastern neighbours. The focus of the analysis is not so much on the diplomatic relationship with these countries per se, but rather on uncovering to what extent the cooperation between EU and MS diplomatic representations adds to the EU's aim of achieving a stronger, more efficient and coherent European Union in external relations. Finally, the thesis is based on the analysis of field-work data collected⁷ between 2011 and 2016 in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus that allow us to zoom in on the practices of EU diplomatic performance in Eastern Europe.

1.2. Analytical framework

When talking about European diplomatic performance abroad, the focus is on practices: as the modern definition of diplomacy also identifies it, it is about the practice and the management of relations between actors. The prevailing mode of evaluation in this thesis does not focus on the examination of EU's success or failure in one policy area or another. Especially since scholars have outlined the EU's capacity to influence its external environment (Allen & Smith, 1990; Ginsberg, 2001; Hettne, 2011; Wunderlich & Bailey, 2011); this thesis focuses on the external dimension of EU actions, i.e. diplomatic practices. The rationale behind studying EU performance in international politics stems from the academic debate which calls for increasing focus on the EU's results and achievements in world affairs (Ginsberg 2001; Mahncke 2011). As one scholar put it, the academic community 'should [...] engage in a debate of what the EU does [and] why it does it' (Smith 2010a, p. 343). Yet, so far the scholarly research dedicated to exploring and unpacking the notion of EU performance and focusing on diplomatic practices has been scarce. Notable examples include the studies that analyse EU performance in multilateral institutions (Oberthür *et al.* 2013; Jørgensen & Laatikainen, 2013) and those that explore EU

⁶ See TEU, art 4.3

⁷ More details on field-work and interviews conducted are presented in section 1.3 of the Introduction.

foreign policy and diplomacy as 'community of practice' (Adler-Nissen, 2008; Bicchi, 2011; Bicchi, 2014). More common, however, is the focus on EU impact, EU role performance, EU legitimacy and EU effectiveness in international affairs (Smith 2000; Ginsberg 2001; Van Schaik 2013; Elgström and Smith 2006; Bickerton 2007; Smith 2010b; Vasilyan 2011; Smith 2013; Romanyshyn 2015). Within EU studies more generally, the practice turn⁸ is a rather recent research development that "will allow to grasp otherwise uncharted experiences and practices that are crucial for the performance of European integration" (Adler-Niessen, 2016, p. 88).

For the purposes of this thesis, the analytical framework⁹ borrows from organizational management (more specifically: performance) literature that focuses on practice as the unit of analysis. In this thesis, looking at performance implies examining and evaluating EU diplomatic practices against pre-set goals as well as understanding how everyday practices inform the EU's actions. It also allows us to explore the relationship between national and EU level in the new post-Lisbon setting, where the EU delegations perform traditional and new diplomatic functions: representing the Union and also cooperating with national embassies. And lastly, it allows us to conduct a screening of capabilities and to understand how these pertain to the diplomatic realm. In order to do so, this thesis adapts the operationalization offered by organisation performance literature (Lusthaus et al., 2002) and proposes to measure performance in relation to three criteria: effectiveness, relevance and capabilities. This thesis couples the discussion regarding the practice turn in IR and EU studies with the one on performance to uncover the nature of these diplomatic practices. Therefore, the analytical purpose here is not to study the cause-effect relationship, but rather the dimensions of everyday diplomatic practices in third countries: "how things are supposed to be, and the political universe of how they very often actually are" (Sharp, 1999, p. 5).

1.3. Methodological considerations

The epistemological position of this thesis is interpretivist, as knowledge derived from it includes the interpretation and understandings of people regarding the social

⁸ More details on the practice turn in EU and IR studies are explained in Chapter 3.

⁹ The analytical framework and the operationalization of the three criteria is further elaborated in Chapter 3.

phenomena explored in this thesis (Matthews & Ross, 2010), such as EU diplomatic practice more generally, and more specifically the relations between the EU and national diplomatic actors. The theoretical contribution of this thesis is the development of an analytical framework to examine EU diplomatic success and the focus on practice as the unit of analysis. The investigative nature of the analytical framework stems from a set of proposed assumptions (see Chapter 2, section 2.3.2.) that are not causal in nature but rather associative: “the belief that there is a relationship between two concepts, but not necessarily that the relationship is causal” (Matthews & Ross 2010, p. 59). The unit of analysis is the practice of diplomacy: focusing on practices allows to “zoom in on the quotidian unfolding of international life and analyse the ongoing accomplishments that, put together, constitute the ‘big picture’ of world politics” (Adler & Pouliot, 2011, p.1) which relies on qualitative methodology such as fieldwork (Adler-Niessen, 2016).

This thesis embraces a qualitative research-design based on an exploratory case-study. As Yin (1993) explains, this type of research involves field-work and data collection conducted before the final definition of study questions and hypothesis. In the case of the case-studies for this research, field-work was conducted after the establishment of the research questions but prior to defining the assumptions, especially important when investigating diplomacy, i.e. the practice of diplomacy. In this regard descriptive and evaluative research questions are central to this research. Questions concerned with the study of the success of EU diplomacy and how the EU has addressed pre-Lisbon challenges via its innovation on the ground (‘to what extent is the EU a successful diplomatic actor after the introduction of the EEAS’, ‘how does one study the success of EU diplomacy’ and ‘how has the Lisbon innovation in diplomacy manifest on the ground and has it addressed the main pre-existing challenges’) are evaluative as the questions are concerned with the value of diplomatic practice in Eastern Europe. On the other hand, the descriptive questions examine how the EU conducts diplomatic relations post-Lisbon in an attempt to describe and quantify EU diplomacy in Eastern Europe.

It is important to note that an exploratory investigation rests on assumptions and expectations about behaviour and practices, which can then be re-shaped and developed further after the exploration. Given the fact that the research questions were defined in advance of the field-work itself, this allowed the formulation of more

structured ways of gathering data. At the same time embracing an exploratory investigation, allowed the development, during field-work, of a set of exploratory research questions concerned with the understanding of the diplomatic practices such as: 'what are the diplomatic practices in third countries after the inauguration of the EEAS?' and 'what are the drivers and dividers in the conduct of EU diplomacy post-Lisbon?'. In addressing these exploratory questions we could acquire information in areas where there is limited prior understanding of EU diplomacy in Eastern Europe (these findings are presented in Chapter 7).

There are certain concerns raised by such an approach: as Yin (1993) explains, "the major problem with exploratory case studies is that the data collected during the pilot phase are then also used as part of any ensuing case study" (p. 6). To address this, triangulation was used to map data from different sources and to cross-check the findings. Therefore, in terms of data analysis, the evidence for analysis was extracted from the data triangulation of secondary data, official documents and elite interviews. Hence data extracted from the elite interviews has been corroborated against other interviews, policy papers, Commission and EEAS reports, newspaper articles and existing academic literature. Furthermore, this thesis relies on process-tracing "to obtain information about well-defined and specific events and processes, and the most appropriate sampling procedures" (Tansey 2007, p. 765). Process-tracing helps us to address the problem with an exploratory case-study as it does not only deductively but also "inductively uses evidence from within a case to develop hypotheses (or in the case of this thesis, working assumptions) that might explain the case" (Bennet & Checkel, 2012, p. 7).

Overall, the methodological techniques employed in this thesis are collecting data from primary and secondary sources, conducting elite interviews combined with process tracing (and practice-tracing, given that practice is the unit of analysis). Data for this research has been systematically collected from both primary and secondary sources; a literature review has been carried out: manuscripts, policy papers, academic journal articles, laws, news articles as well as elite interviews, relevant to the research questions under study have been examined. These sources provide insights for the analytical framework of the thesis; offer archival as well as up to date information on the conduct of EU diplomacy in Eastern Europe and its development, on the background of EU relationship with the three Eastern European countries, on

project funding by the MS embassies and the EU delegations, on the means of communication and information-sharing as well as mechanisms of European cooperation abroad between MS embassies and the EU delegations.

The empirical contribution of this thesis, therefore, consists of probing working assumptions by applying them to three case studies of the three EU neighbours - Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus - where both EU and MS embassies are present. Permanent changes and developments in the EU's Eastern neighbourhood represent a challenging context for EU diplomatic actorness and all three countries represent a test-case for EU diplomatic performance and European cooperation abroad. After the Orange revolution in Ukraine, the radical change of government in Moldova in 2009, the appearance of civil society (CS) in Belarus, coupled with the presence and activity of EU diplomatic actors, it seemed that the EU was in a very good position to engage successfully with the East. On the one hand, countries belonging to the ENP and in the case of these three countries to the specific dimension called the Eastern Partnership (EaP) are involved in an enhanced relationship with the EU: superior economic cooperation, visa liberalization and for some of them, the negotiation of new association agreements (Commission, 2008). On the other, these countries face human rights, market liberalization and energy security issues, political instability and strong Russian influence and/or dependency. Therefore it is of interest to this thesis to reveal the practices of cooperation between EU Delegations and national embassies on the EU's immediate border, where EU ambitions are high: the case studies include the biggest and oldest established Delegations (Ukraine: 1993) and the smallest and most recent ones (Moldova: 2005 and Belarus: 2008) in the neighbourhood. Ukraine is the biggest Delegation out of all established in a European Neighbourhood Policy country; while Moldova and Belarus are the smallest after Libya, Syria and Israel.

Between 2013 and 2016 field-work for data collection was undertaken in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. The author conducted 48 in-depth semi-structured interviews with representatives of the EU diplomatic community: 12 EU diplomats (out of which 7 EEAS and 5 Commission), 34 national diplomats and also 5 local staff members (see Annex 1). Interviews were also conducted with civil servants and civil society representatives from the three countries (see Annex 2). All interviews followed a guide (see Annex 3), lasted 60 minutes on average and have been codified and

made anonymous. The elite interviews were conducted in a semi-structured form (Matthews & Ross 2010; Berg, 2009)¹⁰. In this type of interviews “questions are typically asked of each interviewee in a systematic and consistent order, but the interviewers are allowed freedom to digress [and] probe far beyond the answers to their prepared and standardized questions” (Berg, 2009, p. 107). Questions were focused on the innovations introduced by the Lisbon Treaty and their incorporation in daily diplomatic practices. Interviewees were asked to give concrete examples based on their experience at their respective mission and explain them. This in turn, underpinned a focus on the practices of EU diplomatic performance in Eastern Europe. The semi-structured interviews are used to explain the post-Lisbon innovations, their implementation and implications on the ground. These elite interviews were also used to explore diplomats’ experiences and opinions regarding the practice of EU diplomacy after the inauguration of the EEAS as well as their cooperation in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus with other national and EU diplomats. When expressing their opinions, the interviewees identified and elaborated on the positive and the negative implications of the Lisbon changes on the ground. Interview data analysis has been done via RQDA, a computer assisted data analysis software for qualitative research that allows coding, sorting and memo-ing of a bigger interview data-set (the details of the software, how it works and how it was used are described in Annex 4). Besides facilitating the management of transcribed interview data, this package assists in triangulation and allows the identification of further themes to be explored in research (which are outside the scope of the thesis).

1.4. Structure of the thesis

Following the Introduction, the thesis conducts an analytical literature review of four strands of relevant literature, namely the one that discusses the EU as an international actor, the one regarding the practice of diplomacy, the one on performance and the one on ‘the practice turn’ in international relations and EU studies presented in Chapters 2 and 3. In Chapter 2 the discussion focuses on analytically summarising EU actorness and the practice of diplomacy. It is important

¹⁰ While using the semi-structured interviews reference throughout the thesis; some sources on qualitative research methods refer to these as semi-standardized (Berg, 2009). As a data collection method the explanation is similar, this thesis considers them synonymous.

to understand the different prerequisites that define EU international actorness in order to show the effects of actorness in EU's neighbourhood. It is also essential to understand the notion and function of diplomacy and the developments of the diplomatic system of the EU. This chapter should be read as an umbrella chapter that explains what the EU is as an international actor, what diplomacy is about and what the EU professes vs. how it achieves it. Chapter 2 shows that in its immediate neighbourhood, the EU's actorness faces challenges that entrap it in certain foreign policy dilemmas. The EU and its member states are wobbling between the choices of values vs. interest-driven decisions, problems of collective action and choices of rule-transfer vs geopolitics. These challenges used to drive MS and EU institutions apart in the past and are still relevant today. These dilemmas inform the reader about EU international actorness and reflect certain EU ambiguities. These ambiguities link back to prerequisites of EU international actorness and the functions of diplomacy. Given the innovation proposed by the Lisbon Treaty, the general expectation in this sense is that a successful diplomatic actor should manage to solve or bypass the three dilemmas through the practice of diplomacy. Hence this chapter concludes with a set of working assumptions for overcoming the dilemmas via the use of diplomacy that will be revisited in Chapter 7.

After presenting how diplomacy might address the dilemmas in the end of the second chapter, Chapter 3 proposes how to analytically address the guiding research question: '*To what extent has the EU developed as a successful diplomatic actor after the inauguration of the EEAS?*' To critically assess EU diplomatic performance in its immediate neighbourhood in the East, namely in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus, the analytical framework relies mainly on two sets of literature – one on organisational performance and one on the 'practice turn' in IR and EU studies. We adapt commonly used indicators from the organisational studies literature and identify 3 criteria, namely effectiveness, relevance and capabilities that we conceptualise in this chapter with the help of the practice turn in IR/EU studies. Looking at performance in this way implies examining and evaluating EU diplomatic practices against pre-set goals (*effectiveness*). It also allows us to learn about the relationship between the national and EU levels in the new post-Lisbon setting, where the EU delegations perform traditional and new diplomatic functions: representing the European Union and also cooperating with national embassies

(*relevance*). Finally, it allows us to conduct screening of capabilities and to understand how these pertain to the diplomatic realm (*capabilities*). The chapter concludes by discussing the link between these three criteria and the working assumptions proposed at the end of Chapter 2 about how EU's dilemmas might be addressed through diplomacy.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 provide the reader with the empirical analysis of the thesis. Structured in the same manner, these chapters will firstly present a brief overview of the Moldova-EU relations, Ukraine-EU relations and Belarus-EU relations respectively. This section lays the foundation for the discussion of effectiveness in the subsequent section. As explained in Chapter 3, effectiveness is a criterion that is assessed on two dimensions, one that explores the degree of democratic governance in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus and the other that investigates the diplomatic practices of representing the Union in these countries. The relevance section then evaluates how EU and member-state embassies in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus cooperate and contribute to formulating a common approach. Finally, the capabilities section elaborates on the importance of diplomatic capital, presenting evidence on EU's diplomatic resources and instruments on the ground. Thus, Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present, in a structured manner, the empirical evidence collected during the field-work conducted in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus respectively, as well as data collected from the study of secondary sources (such as policy briefs, legislation, national and international reports as well as academic findings from scholarly literature on Moldova and the EU, Ukraine and the EU and Belarus and the EU).

A discussion of the findings presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 is conducted in Chapter 7 that shows the application of the three criteria that have been discussed in Chapter 3. Whereas the previous three chapters present empirical evidence on a country by country basis, this chapter compares and contrasts the findings of the 3 individual case-studies. It provides insights on EU diplomatic practice in Eastern Europe more generally and identifies drivers and dividers in the conduct of diplomacy more specifically. Chapter 7 will then revisit the set of working assumptions for overcoming the dilemmas via the use of diplomacy presented in Chapter 2 and will discuss them in light of these findings.

The final chapter of this thesis provides the reader with the general conclusion and focuses on the implications of the analytical framework and the argument. Chapter 8 will initially revisit the research question and afterwards, critically reflect on the analytical framework used. The concluding chapter will also discuss the methodology used and will explore the implications of conducting such research for policy and politics. Besides summarizing the findings of this research Chapter 8 will acknowledge its limitations and propose further avenues for research.

Chapter 2. Framing EU international actorness

The aim of this chapter is to unwrap the complexity of the European Union through conceptualising the EU as an international actor: bringing forward issues of EU international actorness discussed by the scholarly community and proposing a set of working assumptions on how the changes that result from the Lisbon Treaty, with the inauguration of the EEAS, relate to a successful EU as a diplomatic actor. As noted earlier, the overarching research question of this thesis – ‘to what extent has the EU developed as a successful diplomatic actor after the inauguration of the EEAS?’ – does not come with a straightforward or simple answer. In its external relations, the European Union is characterised mainly by civilian and normative actions coupled with the pursuit of certain interests. The European Union exports norms and rules pertaining to democratic governance; more specifically it promotes security, stability and prosperity in one region of the world or another. Scholars identify certain issues and have certain expectations in relation to the EU’s international behaviour. The highlighted issues summarise that the EU combines its civilian approach with soft imperialism and a sort of pragmatism. It remains criticised for member-states still not speaking with one voice, for not claiming its geopolitical role or for applying double standards - promoting values while pursuing certain interests. In the first section of this chapter, the prerequisites of EU international actorness are identified and the application of these prerequisites in action is then discussed.

Subsequently, the second section of the chapter focuses on conceptualising diplomacy in order to understand what a diplomatic actor embraces. In terms of diplomatic actorness the European Union is present and involved in international affairs via its network of 139 Delegations and offices that challenge traditional forms of diplomacy. As a non-state actor it has opened Commission representations that have been upgraded, as a result of the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, to Union Delegation status and have acquired a diplomatic personality. In third countries the latter carry out the EU’s foreign policy objectives and are involved in exporting EU rules and norms. Developing an extensive diplomatic presence worldwide should add value to the EU’s efforts in its neighbourhood and facilitate dealing with the issues identified by scholarly research such as the EU’s visibility or leadership.

The European Union is a complex actor with a unique organisational setup; any research on the EU as an international actor needs to consider this complexity. A discussion about what the EU professes and how it achieves it beyond its borders and specifically in Eastern Europe is presented in the third section. The analysis here shows that the EU's actorness faces specific challenges in its neighbourhood that entrap it in three foreign policy dilemmas. These dilemmas show the complexity of the EU as an international actor, serve as background for informing the reader about EU international actorness, and provide a reflection of these specific EU ambiguities. The latter link back to prerequisites of EU international actorness and the functions of diplomacy. After the inauguration of the EEAS, the upgrade to Union Delegation implies that the Delegations represent the Union, that they cooperate with member-state embassies on the ground, exchange information and contribute to formulating and implementing the 'common approach'. Given such an innovation related to the EU diplomatic actorness proposed by the Lisbon Treaty, the general expectation in this thesis is that a successful diplomatic actor should manage to solve or bypass the three dilemmas through the practice of diplomacy. Hence this chapter concludes with a set of working assumptions for overcoming the dilemmas via the use of diplomacy that will be revisited in Chapter 7.

2.1. The substance of EU international actorness

The discussion in this section and labelling of the EU as one type of power or another, but especially criticisms of it, refer, in general terms, to certain prerequisites that the EU is expected to have when interacting in international politics. Authors mention goals, interests, capability (military might), presence, EU norms and their promotion that one can refer to as prerequisites. The first section focuses on analytically summarising the different factors that define EU international actorness in order to show the effects of actorness in the EU's neighbourhood.

2.1.1. EU international actorness: presence, opportunity, capability

The external actions of the European Union represent a central topic throughout the scholarly literature on the role and actions of the European Union in the international arena. This is due to the myriad of political and diplomatic interactions the EU is

involved in outside its borders. From the early's 90, when the EU was struggling to build-up 'long-standing foundations' for its international role till today, the EU is shaping its 'identifiable and specific role' in international relations (Allen & Smith 1990, p. 23 and p. 26; Hill & Smith 2011). The EU is constantly involved in the international arena, inter alia, through trade, development aid and human rights promotion. This political activism leads scholars to look for different prerequisites of EU as an actor on the international arena as well as to develop different typologies of EU actorness.

Prerequisites of EU actorness

According to Allen and Smith (1990), actorness is defined by presence, which is in its turn defined by several factors: one's credentials and legitimacy, one's capacity to act and mobilize resources and one's place in the perceptions and expectations of policy makers (p. 21). They refer to Western Europe, neither a sovereign state actor nor a dependent phenomenon in international relations, but an actively present actor in international interactions. Western Europe is further described as a flexible actor with a collective yet pluralistic identity, with different priorities in the reordering of the political world order, of which other international actors are aware of (*idem*).

Based on the definition of 'presence', Jupille and Caporaso (1998) discuss further analytical criteria of EU actorness. According to the authors, actorness is defined by actor capacity in global politics which is assessed based on the following four main components: (1) *recognition* – acceptance by other international actors; (2) *authority* – actors' legal competence; (3) *autonomy* – independence from other actors combined with institutional distinctiveness and (4) *cohesion* – an actor able to formulate and articulate internally consistent policy preferences (*ibidem*).

EU actorness literature then focuses on the evolution of the EU as an external policy actor and proposes three broad categories of constructing actorness: presence, opportunity and capability (Bretherton & Vogler, 2006). *Presence* conceptualizes EU's relationship with the external environment and refers to the EU's ability to exert influence outside its borders; *opportunity* refers to the external factors that either constrain or enable EU actorness; and *capability* denotes EU capacity to react

effectively to its external environment (i.e. external opportunities and expectations) through the use of its instruments (ibidem).

Table 1: Prerequisites of EU actorness		
Actorness	Presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legitimacy • Authority • Recognition • Autonomy
	Opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factors that influence actorness • 'capability-expectations' gap • Cohesion • Perception of external policy makers
	Capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to react to external environment • Instruments • Resources

In discussing *presence*, Bretherton and Vogler (2006) broadly follow the conceptualization of Allen and M. Smith (1990) and explain the concept as a consequence of EU's internal dimension rather than purposive external action, it refers to the ability to exert influence beyond its borders and shape them. EU action or inaction is shaped by a context, defined as *opportunity*; an opportunity that EU takes or refrains from. This opportunity links to Hill's (1993) 'capability-expectations gap' that affects the EU. It is the expectation of the EU to perform in its international role of conflict-manager, pacifier or any other role that is directly linked to the EU's ability to agree, combined with availability of resources and instruments. This is to say that the presence of an opportunity does not directly feed back into EU action or inaction but is instead a complex constellation of factors. Resources and instruments are just one dimension envisaged by the EU's *capability* as a category of EU actorness. It refers to further requirements such as: shared commitments to values; domestic legitimation of decisions relating to external policies; ability to identify priorities and formulate policies in a consistent and coherence manner and the availability and capacity to use policy instruments (Sjöstedt, 1977 as cited in Bretherton & Vogler 2006). Whether the EU chooses to use civilian or soft imperialism instruments, in evaluating its international identity, authors highlight that implementation is inconsistent due to certain clashes of interest, for example the

clash between economic and strategic interest: “material interests can prevail over the longer-term agenda of promoting human rights or democracy and of regional cooperation” (Smith 2008, p. 236).

To sum up, as shown in Table 1 above, one may identify presence, opportunity and capability as the three main prerequisites for EU’s international actorhood. It is against them, that research discusses EU international actorhood and the key problems of EU actions vis-à-vis its neighbours.

Exploring the prerequisites of EU actorhood

Scholars examine presence, opportunity and capability from different perspectives and emphasize, empirically, certain challenges and issues for EU international actorhood. Touching on all three prerequisites, Smith (2008) emphasizes that the EU’s international identity is closely linked with the effectiveness of achieving policy goals. The author identifies the issue of unity among member-states and institutions; the issue of EU double standards – “the EU should do as it wishes others to do”; and the issue of policy instruments – whether the EU has the appropriate instruments or can use these appropriately in discussing EU’s effectiveness. In pursuing new analytical ways of examining EU role and impact in international politics, Elgström and Smith (2006) consider opportunity and capability, namely: EU goals and values, EU instruments and its institutional construction as making the EU’s international participation distinctive. The authors explain that the EU’s objectives are ‘milieu goals’ that “aim to shape the environment in which the actor operates” (Elgström & Smith 2006, p. 2); that its policy instruments are of civilian nature - economic and diplomatic instruments, persuasion and positive incentives or constructive engagement; and that through its institutional construction an externalisation of principles and rationales generic to domestic politics has been made possible. Acknowledging the EU’s presence as “more than a dwarf and less than a superpower” (Ginsberg 2001, p. 9), scholars show that through its actions and inactions the EU still suffers from the ‘capability-expectations gap’. Others framed a different gap, namely: “[the EU’s] normative power of attraction and its weak empirical power to do things” (Zielonka 1998 as cited in Ginsberg 2001, p.9). EU acknowledgement and strategic use of its external environment alongside EU

external coherence, i.e. opportunity, for instance, are the conditions that are reflected in Ginsberg's study of EU's political impact. The study shows that there are instances where the EU has some political impact and there are other instances that reveal the opposite; the EU either failed or has deliberately chosen not to act.

Ginsberg (2001) proposes to consider several sources that stimulate EU foreign policy actions. One of these sources is external stimuli that influence the development of the EU as an international political actor – economic crisis, financial crisis, interaction with external partners. Second – the politics of scale introduced by Ginsberg in explaining how EU collective action is more beneficial, less costly and comes with more leverage than acting unilaterally; which is happening through the use of multilateral diplomacy.

Third, for Ginsberg, national actors are an important source – member-states upload their foreign policy interests to the EU level which, in turn, has a download process in the form of the foreign policy impact on member-states. Given the growing number of members of the EU, coalitions of the willing may be formed that will account for flexibility in foreign policy decision-making and it is emphasized as a source that stimulates foreign policy in general. Furthermore, each member-state comes from a different domestic environment with a different political culture that shapes policy preferences and accounts for their conduct on the European level; this conduct is also interrelated with the activity of NGOs both internally and externally that have the power to influence policy choices. Last but not least, European interests and actors also influence EU foreign policy actions, especially in instances of convergence of EU foreign policy interests. Thus the EU's impact depends on external coherence, which is a reflection of internal coherence (the issue of collective action, the process of uploading foreign policy preferences, the influence of domestic environment) alongside dependence on factors and actors from the external environment.

More specifically, in relation to its neighbours, it is through conditionality that the EU has influenced internal and external policies of those non-member states that want to associate with it, a case particularly relevant for the big bang Eastern enlargement in 2004-2007. A strand of research, external governance¹¹, has focused on Central and

¹¹ The basic definition of external governance (a more legalistic approach) refers to impact/effectiveness through explaining that it refers to parts of EU acquis that are being transferred to non-EU states and are adopted nationally (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier 2004; Lavenex & Schimmelfennig 2011). The framework of external governance conceptualizes the relationship between the EU and its neighbours emphasizing the process of transfer of EU rules and norms as well as their impact on these countries (Lavenex 2004; Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier 2004; Schimmelfennig & Wagner 2004, etc.). This relationship is

Eastern European countries (CEE, part of the Eastern enlargement process), and the current non-EU member states, part of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and reflects on the EU's presence, opportunity and capabilities. In both cases, the analysis centres on the study of effective rule-transfer. For instance, in the case of the CEE, research concludes that rule-transfer is more effective when the EU offers rewards in form of assistance, association agreements and EU membership (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier 2005; Lavenex & Schimmelfennig 2011). The process of rule-transfer is successful since it applies the mechanism of EU conditionality; the implementation of reforms and the change of democratic institutions in these countries are driven by the promise of EU membership. Rule-transfer also relies on the other two mechanisms of social learning and lesson drawing that explain that "a state adopts EU rules if it is persuaded of the appropriateness of EU rules" (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier 2004 p. 676) or, according to the lesson-drawing mechanism, "a state adopts EU rules, if it expects these rules to solve domestic policy problems effectively" (ibidem).

In contrast to the positive effect on the CEE, the EU has not had a similar effect in the neighbourhood because reforms mainly stagnate and are not implemented, just adopted. The example of the ENP countries further highlights the importance of EU's actorhood (through the combination of prerequisites it entails). It is in this region that the prerequisites of EU actorhood face challenges and thus the EU's effectiveness overall is questioned. Scholars emphasize that, even without a membership perspective, the relationship between the EU and the ENP countries takes place on the basis of extension of the EU's norms, rules and policies and it looks like the EU has the power to trigger reforms in ENP countries (Freyburg et al. 2009; Lavenex 2004; Lavenex & Schimmelfennig 2009; Gänzle, 2008; Kelley, 2006; Lavenex & Schimmelfennig, 2011 and others). Nonetheless, research on the effectiveness of rule-transfer has predominantly called attention to the fact that such conditions as domestic costs and credibility of conditionality have prevailed in the case of Eastern enlargement rule-transfer (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier 2004). Authors explain that when the EU applied 'democratic conditionality' (fundamental political principles of the EU, the norms of human rights and liberal democracy), the size of domestic

characterized by the process of the transposition of the EU rules in these countries; which implies the transfer of the EU rules, their adoption and implementation by the non-member states (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier 2005).

costs profiled a response to EU rules while in the case of 'acquis conditionality' (specific rules of the *acquis communautaire*) EU rule transfer was shaped by the EU membership perspective that outweighed domestic costs (*ibidem*). This is to say, for instance, that choosing appropriate instruments and considering the neighbours internal environments was of key importance to the effectiveness of EU actions.

In conclusion, EU international actorness implies its presence in the international arena, where the EU is recognized and accepted as a player, where it interacts outside its borders and shows its capability, i.e. its capacity to mobilize and utilize instruments and resources and where a range of factors constrain or enable its actorness, i.e. opportunity. It is these prerequisites that lay the foundation for conceptualizing the EU as a certain type of actor, to which the next sub-section now turns.

2.1.2. EU actorness: from civilian to diplomatic

Early research (Duchêne 1972) depicts an EU, that despite not having military force, has the power to influence other international actors via diplomatic, economic and legal means; and thus the EU presents itself as 'a model of reconciliation and peace'. Scholars suggest a '*civilian power*' EU that focuses on economic interests and goals and promotes legal principles and standards of multilateral cooperation in international affairs. Research shows that enlargement is one of the solid examples of building a project of reconciliation and of peace for the accession states on the one hand; and for the international community on the other; hence underlining the EU's status as a civilian power (Feldman 1998, as cited in Ginsberg 2001, p.433). Whereas this is noticeable in the case of today's EU internally, externally, after failing to stand out as an actor during the Balkan War in the early 90s some referred to it as a 'political dwarf' or a 'paper tiger' (Almond 1994, as cited in Ginsberg 2001) and questioned its powers.

Later, after the EU's increasing focus on security and defence, as well as development of some military means, scholars came to question the EU as a civilian actor and discuss it as a '*military power Europe*' that needs to strategize its defence policy (Bull 1982; Manners 2002). In practice, the EU has not focused on showing off its military might. On the contrary, the EU's foreign policy actions more often than not

are projected on the background of a normative basis; a basis that aims at security and stability at its borders. And even more so, it comes with material benefits – access to the EU internal market. Consequently, scholars refer to the EU's role in international relations as a *regional power* (Raik 2006; Telò 2007; Wunderlich & Bailey 2011). Authors argue that the EU is stronger and more influential as a regional power through its ability to promote stability and democracy, especially visible in the Southern and Eastern enlargement cases: projection of norms and values outside its borders makes the EU a powerful regional actor (Raik 2006). As part of the emerging global governance system, the EU becomes the reference point in the new regionalism studies; an example of “fostering regional stability, regional policy co-operation, regional economic convergence and regional political co-operation” (Wunderlich & Bailey 2011, p.5).

As argued by Manners (2002) the EU's “ability to shape conceptions of ‘normal’ in international relations” (p.239) is the motive of EU actions. This portrays the EU as a *‘normative power’* in international relations; and some argue that because the EU did not become a project of military superpower but an economic one, its impact in international politics is unique (Ginsberg 2001). Manners (2008) further consolidates the argument of a normative power EU, emphasizing that the norms that the EU promotes in its treaties and policies represent a ‘constitutionalization’ of the EU becoming one of the strongest normative powers in the world. Indeed, EU norms are comprised in its treaties, policies, declarations and other acts. This offers the EU the opportunity to use in international relations a novel instrument – norm diffusion - of such norms as peace and liberty, democracy, rule of law and human rights, social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development and good governance (Manners 2002)¹².

But the EU as a normative power comes with certain limitations. Outside its borders, EU normative power “is sustainable only if it is felt to be legitimate by those who practice and experience it” (Manners 2008, p. 46). There are those that question the EU as being strictly normative be it regionally or globally (Hyde-Price 2008; Wood 2009; Zielonka 2011). These authors put an emphasis on the fact that the *EU acts*

¹² It is also important to note that there is an overlap between the conceptualisation of the EU as normative power and the EU as a rule-transferer: as researchers on the CEEC and external governance have also observed (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier 2004; Lavenex & Schimmelfennig, 2009 and others)

as a *'calculator not a crusader'* (initially argued by Hyde-Price, 2008, p. 29), in view of its (and its member-states') underlying interests and strategies. In this respect Hyde-Price (2008) highlights three instruments that the EU holds and intertwines them in foreign policy – 'collective economic interests in global trade'; 'collective shaping of regional milieu' and 'second-order normative concerns'. Whereas the intent behind EU actions may have a normative foundation, in practice these correspond to political, economic or strategic interests. Following a similar argumentation, Wood (2009) shows that in its quest of energy security, the EU is nothing more than a *normal power*; a category that Wood (2009) ascribes to "actors [who] are pragmatic and materialist in their aims and policy orientations" (p. 116). Earlier research on EU foreign policy has also suggested that the implementation of foreign policy is done by the EU through pragmatic means (Smith 2008).

In analysing how the EU conducts its foreign policy relations, Hettne and Söderbaum (2005) discuss whether the EU influences its neighbours via *civilian power or soft imperialism*. The authors argue that the EU has already an impact on the international arena through its mere presence (due to its demography, economy etc.); yet a stronger presence is felt when the EU applies its actorhood (defined as capacity to act). This, in turn, relies on the relationship between internal coherence and external impact. It is in circumstances of strong actorhood that the EU can exercise civilian power more effectively. In this sense, "Europe will be able to influence the world order towards its own preferred model of civil power, dialogue, respect for different interests" etc. (ibidem, p. 539). Whereas civilian power Europe is based on the importance of values and norms, soft imperialism is codified in relation to the nature of negotiations – dialogue-like vs. imposition. EU soft imperialism, as the authors define is "soft power applied in a hard way that is an asymmetric form of dialogue or even the imposition or strategic use of norms and conditionalities enforced for reasons of self-interest" (p. 539). The authors have identified four different forms of EU relations with its neighbours from enlargement to stabilization to bilateralism to interregionalism; and the conclusion is that it varies on a case by case from civilian power Europe to soft imperialism. As a general overview,

depending on issue area the EU changes from more civilian (environment, development) to more imperialism (security, trade) in all the four forms identified¹³.

Whereas the official relations take place under the umbrella of civilian norms, goes the argument, in practice their implementation take the form of imposition of those norms as a function of EU's self-interests. According to some this may happen because the EU itself does not resemble a Westphalian state but rather a neo-medieval empire, characterized by soft, flexible borders, multiplicity of institutions, pacification of the external environment as policy aim and mainly civilian instruments as policy means (Zielonka 2008). Zielonka (2011) further investigates the EU civilian power that promotes universal norms in comparison to other international actors such as United States, China and Russia and concludes that "the EU may not be such an exceptional actor in normative terms as is often suggested" (p. 299); so it is an *ordinary power* rather than unique. Earlier, Smith (2006) highlighted that also in its choice of foreign policy objectives, the EU is not such a unique international actor; its uniqueness comes with the legal character of the EU's relations with neighbouring countries and the use of persuasion rather than coercion. Unique or ordinary, for practitioners, the EU may well not be a superpower but it could be a *model power* – in trade relations, in environment issues, in investment strategies, in international law and human rights issues – through common action, through developing shared values and setting global standards, thus becoming a role model for others to follow (Miliband 2007).

With the introduction of the Lisbon Treaty even more attention has been geared toward the EU's diplomatic actorness. Today the EU has a vast diplomatic network, membership in a variety of international organizations, it maintains bilateral and multilateral diplomatic relations as well as conducts thematic diplomacy such as economic, cultural or parliamentary, with a growing diplomatic infrastructure. The Brussels-based role of the EEAS and the development of the relationship between the EU and national diplomatic services in third countries have both received academic and non-academic attention (Allen & Smith 2012; Austermann 2012 and

¹³ (1) *enlargement* - is the relation that refers to acceding countries to the EU and is evaluated as a shift from civilian to soft imperialism as this relationship evolved from political and security dilemmas; (2) *stabilization* – pertinent to the EU's relation with the ENP countries are also categorized as soft imperialism since it is an asymmetric partnership based on conditionalities imposed by the EU; (3) *bilateralism* – implies a series of EU bilateral relations that it developed with the USA, Russia, China, Mexico, Brazil, Japan etc. This relationship tends to incline towards a EU civilian power as the balance of power inclines not to the EU advantage and (4) *interregionalism* – refers to EU's relations with more distant neighbours in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

2014; Balfour and Raik 2013; Bátorá 2013; Duke 2014; Drieskens 2012; Hanses & Schaer 2012; Henökl 2014; Hocking & Smith 2011; Pomorska & Juncos 2013; Merket 2012; Maurer & Raik 2014; Rijks & Whitman 2007; Vanhoonacker & Reslow 2010; Wouters & Duquet 2011). Some emphasize the post-Lisbon opportunity in developing EU diplomatic assets (Baltag & Smith 2015; Melissen 2013;); others reveal how member-states seem reluctant to embrace this new setting of cooperation in pursuing their foreign policy objectives (Blockmans 2012; Comelli & Matarazzo 2011; Petrov, Pomorska, and Vanhoonacker 2012). The fast pace of challenges occurring in the EU's neighbourhood, coupled with the complexity of the overall outstanding issues in international affairs, create the need for a strategic approach in EU diplomacy; and "also require the combined diplomacies of the EU and the member states to work for its acceptance by the rest of the world community" (Emerson et al. 2011).

The discussion in this section is part of the broader context of EU actorness that forms the background of EU diplomatic performance. It is important to understand the different prerequisites that define EU international actorness in order to show the effects of actorness in EU's neighbourhood. It is essential at this point to understand the notion and function of diplomacy and the developments of the diplomatic system of the EU. Therefore, in order to discuss EU diplomatic actorness in detail, the next section now turns to summarising the main features and functions of diplomacy in order to understand what diplomatic actorness entails. Through presenting the European diplomatic system we are now moving away from the discussion on EU actorness to the ways in which this actorness can be pursued and implemented via the means of diplomacy.

2.2. The substance of EU diplomatic actorness

Following the discussion on the prerequisites of EU international actorness and how the scholarly community has conceptualized it, the focus of this section is on diplomacy and specifically on EU diplomatic actorness. States and other actors constantly interact on the world arena where they rely on their diplomatic machineries; and, most recently, the EU has invested in further institutionalising its own. In a rapidly changing world, the character of diplomacy, the traditional means of

foreign policy, has changed in form while its main functions remain the same. The European Union is a new actor on the international arena in terms of diplomatic practice and more specifically, in terms of challenging the traditional forms of diplomacy. It has shaped the context of EU diplomatic methods when it started to participate as a bloc in multilateral diplomatic settings and when it opened (former) Commission delegations in neighbour countries. It is a non-state actor that has developed a diplomatic machinery that carries out tasks outside of Brussels and the activity of which is developing further forms of diplomacy. The first section explains the main functions of diplomacy as well as conceptualizes it and also explains the European diplomatic system and discusses its actors.

2.2.1. Diplomacy: representation, communication, negotiation

Literature on diplomacy emphasizes that the most common confusion made is in using the term diplomacy as synonymous to foreign policy and negotiation (Nicolson 1963; Berridge 1995; Bátorá 2005; Bátorá & Hocking 2009). Whereas these may be seen as synonyms, foreign policy and diplomacy have two separate identities; the two are interrelated and the latter derives from foreign policy. Foreign policy is the responsibility of the Cabinet, whereas diplomacy is the execution of that policy by professionals of this field¹⁴ (Nicolson 1963). The clear-cut distinction between the two, to which scholars subscribe is as follows:

“The distinction between foreign policy as the substance of a state’s relations with other powers and agencies and the purposes it hopes to achieve by these relations, and diplomacy as the process of dialogue and negotiation by which states in a system conduct their relations and pursue their purposes by means short of war, is worth preserving, especially as an aid to clear thinking.”
(Watson 1982, p.II).

The first distinction, that this thesis also embraces, argues that diplomacy is the implementation of foreign policy; and diplomats work on the basis of instructions that they receive (Leguey-Feilleux 2009). Diplomats thus do not design foreign policy, but

¹⁴ There may be some exceptions to this such as for example- summit diplomacy, used by governments at conferences in which the heads of state meet for face to face negotiations

their reports and information are important elements in the formulation of that policy. Diplomacy is thus the interaction between different players on the international arena, all pursuing their own foreign policies. Foreign policy, as Jönsson and Hall (2005) argue, is “an attribute of states” (p. 14). Diplomacy, in turn, refers to its implementation (Bull 2002); “one of the instruments through which [foreign policy] can be effected and the procedures through which actors communicate in systemic ways” (Bátora & Hocking 2009, p.115). Through using such a definition of diplomacy, scholars emphasize that diplomacy is about the conduct (management) of international relations (Nicolson 1963; Johnson 1964; Barston 2013; Leguey-Feilleux 2009). For instance, Nicolson (1963) argues that the “function of diplomacy is the management of the relations between independent States” (p.80); Barston (2013) as well defines diplomacy as the management of relations between states and between states and other actors. A group of authors emphasize this as well (even though they depart from the Webster definition) when they discuss different aspects of diplomacy (Livingstone 1964); diplomacy being referred to as “the conducting of relations between nations, as in making agreements” (ibidem, p.130). They advance this definition and argue that the conduct of relations between nations takes place with the purpose of promoting and defending a country’s vital interests, solving conflicts of interests through negotiation, through the use of persuasion and mutual understanding. In practice, diplomacy also refers to the methods and techniques used by actors during their interaction on the international arena. A derivative of the above mentioned definitions emphasizes the process of diplomacy and defines it respectively: “a method of political interaction at the international level – and the techniques used to carry out political relations across international boundaries” (Leguey-Feilleux 2009, p.1).

Hence, we can sum up the definitions of diplomacy rather as Bull (2002) did in discussing diplomacy and international order: those that refer to the conduct of international relations between states by peaceful means; those that consider the management of international relations by negotiation and the ones that refer to application of intelligence to the conduct of international relations.

Representation, negotiation and communication are referred to as the key functions of diplomacy that represent a necessary condition for the existence and maintenance of international relations (Nicolson 1963; Berridge 1995; Barston 2013; Leguey-

Feilleux 2009; Pigman 2010). Firstly, representation, as one of the main functions of diplomacy, is key for the relationship and international interaction of actors. As Barston (1997) explains, it consists of formal and substantial dimensions. Formal representation refers to diplomatic protocol and participation in official events, while the substantive dimension is of higher importance. The latter refers to explaining and defending one's national policies as well as interpreting those of the other actor (Barston 2013). Others also list representation as a primary function, closely linked to communication and then the following broad functions such as: negotiation, protection of citizens and commercial and legal interests, promotion of cultural, economic and scientific relations; policy advice and preparation (Jönsson 2002). So, dialogue between actors, communication and negotiation take place through representation.

Secondly, negotiation represents an important element in defining diplomacy: "the conduct of international relation by negotiation" (Berridge 1995, p.1). There is a key distinction to be made between diplomacy and negotiation, which is one of the main functions of diplomacy:

"Diplomacy is the management of international relations by negotiation; the method by which these relations are adjusted and managed by ambassadors and envoys; the business or art of the diplomatists." (Nicolson 1963, p.15)

As Nicolson (1963) states, diplomacy and negotiation are not identical; diplomacy refers to the machinery and those processes via which negotiation is carried out. When discussing aims and policies of states, some define diplomacy as "negotiation between political entities which acknowledge each other's independence" (Watson 1982, p.33). As Berridge (1995) explains, diplomacy happens, through negotiation, with the aim of achieving one or another objective. The latter may vary from recognizing certain conflicting interests and agreeing on a compromise in order to identify common interests and agreeing on joint actions; it may also be a combination of these. Negotiation rather than the use of force is a function of diplomacy. Negotiation can be understood as a form of dialogue between states, hence it relies on communication, another function of diplomacy.

Watson (1982), departs from the definitions provided by both Oxford and Webster dictionaries, in assessing the nature of the diplomatic dialogue and defines diplomacy via the existence of a dialogue between states. This brings in the focus on an important dimension and function of diplomacy – *communication*. Communication relies on information-gathering, information-negotiating and identifying other actors' intentions which become central attributes of communication especially in an era of complex international relations where 'information ricochets around the world' (Bull 2002; Berridge 1995; Battersby & Siracusa, 2009). Scholars constantly outline that in diplomatic relations communication is existential. Feltham (2004) emphasized that the communication revolution has produced an impact on the development of diplomatic relations. Berridge (2005) dedicates the second part of his book "Diplomacy: theory and practice" to the important functions of diplomacy beyond negotiations, emphasizing the role of information exchange. The author explains that in both bilateral and multilateral diplomatic relations communication is omnipresent – ranging from face-to-face diplomacy to telephone/internet diplomacy. Communication is quintessential for diplomacy; it is that dimension of diplomacy on which all other functions rely. As Neumann (2008) explains it, "clear communication of intent is a key diplomatic task" (p. 25).

At this point we can revisit the prerequisites identified in Table 1 for international actorhood and add the diplomatic functions (see Table 2 below). In this way, an international presence of the EU as a diplomatic actor happens via representation, as the EU requires recognition, legitimacy and authority in the receiving country. Through embracing this function, a diplomatic actor establishes a diplomatic infrastructure, which, traditionally is represented by the ministries of foreign affairs and the network of embassies and diplomatic representations abroad. The functions of communication and negotiation facilitate the enforcement of the other two prerequisites – opportunity and capabilities. The established diplomatic machinery in the receiving state is the one that is involved in identifying and evaluating the capabilities and intentions of other actors; in collating the information received from other embassies and sources and communicating a coherent picture on the developments in the receiving country to the foreign affairs ministry in the capital of the sending country and if required, "putting forward to the government a choice of appropriate responses to them" (Watson 1982, p. 123); determining the options

available to a government and preparing the basis for a policy or new initiatives; identifying key emerging issues through reporting on political, social, economic and other matters as well as reducing friction between bilateral or multilateral relations if and when a conflict arises (Watson 1982; Barston 2013).

Diplomatic Actorness	Presence via the function of representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legitimacy • Authority • Recognition • Autonomy
	Opportunity via communication and negotiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factors that influence actorness • 'capability-expectations' gap • Cohesion • Perception of external policy makers
	Capability via communication and negotiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to react to external environment • Instruments • Resources

A diplomatic actor relies on the fulfilment of the functions of representation, communication and negotiation by its machinery. The international interaction among actors takes place through the practice of diplomacy that advises, shapes and implements foreign policy. More specifically, diplomacy helps articulate, coordinate and/or secure certain interests. For a diplomatic actor, this implies representing an actor; identifying key issues on political, economic, social or other levels in a third country and reporting back; conducting an evaluation of the situation in partner-countries and preparing the basis for a new policy or initiative or its upgrade; negotiating agreements and/or building consensus to avoid conflicts; and last but not least articulation and coordination of certain foreign policy interests (Nicolson 1963; Livingstone 1964; Watson 1982; Berridge 1995; Barston 2013; Leguey-Feilleux 2009).

For a state actor, an analysis of the conduct of diplomacy of one actor pays attention to the ministries of foreign affairs and the embassies or diplomatic representations around the world today. This is the diplomatic machinery that represents the means that advises, shapes and implements foreign policy as well as a means through which interests are represented, articulated and coordinated. The discussion on the

paradigm of diplomacy, hence, goes beyond the mere distinction between foreign policy and diplomacy, and also accounts for the involvement of foreign policy actors in diplomacy; and today, diplomacy is not only left to professionals, such as trained diplomats, but also to Heads of Governments and parliamentarians, to civil society organisations and multinational corporations and in the EU to the President of the Council, the High Representative and the Commissioners among many others.

Since the EU is a non-state actor and is not a traditional diplomatic actor, the next section is dedicated to mapping out all EU actors that are part of its diplomatic machinery, hence it discusses the diplomatic system of the EU, exploring its evolution and current organisation in order to position the actors on the ground – the EU Delegations and member-state embassies, of interest to this thesis.

2.2.2. The diplomatic system of the EU: actors in EU diplomacy

Significant changes have been made in the foreign policy design of the European Union from the 1992 signing of the Maastricht Treaty that allowed member-states to undertake common actions in this field. The innovation regarding diplomacy in particular came with the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS), the EU's diplomatic service which facilitates carrying out the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). This is not to say that there was no diplomacy carried-out before this, one must acknowledge that the European Union was engaged in a form of diplomatic activity: for example, the first delegation in the history of the EU was the one of the European communities opened in 1954 in London by the European Coal and Steel Community and since 1989, as Bruter (1999) shows, 56 new Commission delegations were opened. These were official EU representations with no diplomatic functions, but rather information and communication offices which were more technical or economic rather than political and were not necessarily seen as a fully-fledged diplomatic arm of the EU.

In 2010, based on a proposal to the Council of Ministers by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, and after the adoption of a resolution by the European Parliament, the EEAS was established and formally launched in January 2011. The aim of this

Decision was to establish a fully functional autonomous body¹⁵ of the European Union under the authority of the High Representative (HR), to ensure consistency across the different areas of external relations, including policy areas and institutions such as the Council and the Commission. The EEAS hence became the EU's diplomatic service, with most of the daily work carried out by five departments that cover the Americas, the Greater Middle East, the Asia-Pacific, Africa and Europe and Central Asia (the detailed organisational chart is provided in Annex 5). According to the Lisbon Treaty, the EEAS is the central administration that has its headquarters in Brussels and also has a network of EU Delegations in third countries and international organisations (see Table 3 below). As the EEAS Human Resources report indicates there were 4,189 staff members (both statutory staff and external staff) working for this organisation towards the end of 2015, out of which 1,928 (46,02%) worked in Brussels and 2,261 (53,97%) in the Delegations (EEAS, 2016a). In practice, the overall diplomatic architecture of the EU involves a series of actors such as the HR, the EU Special Representatives (EUSRs), other EU institutions, such as the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament, the 139 Delegations as well as member-states' diplomatic representation. Below is a brief description of actors at the central level such as the EU HR and other institutions and the ones on the ground such as the Union Delegation and the national embassies (of interest in this research).

EU High Representative and Vice-President of the Commission

It was the Amsterdam Treaty that introduced in 1999 the position of 'High Representative' (HR) for the CFSP first held by Javier Solana. The role of the HR was to contribute to preparing, formulating and implementing EU policy decisions; to coordinate EU Special Representatives (EUSR); to conduct and maintain political dialogue with third parties and therefore provide assistance to the European Council. In 2009, the Lisbon Treaty further developed the role of the HR; now called the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and also including the post of the Vice-President of the Commission undertaken first by

¹⁵ Some would argue that it was not an autonomous body as it was essentially an instrument of the member-state, but as the EEAS has further developed we refer to it as an autonomous body.

Catherine Ashton and after 2014 by Federica Mogherini. The EEAS is tasked with supporting the HR/VP in the overall conducting and developing of the CFSP; with coordinating all aspects of external relations, including trade, humanitarian aid and crisis response, development and the neighbourhood policy; building consensus between EU member-states on their priorities and attending the meetings in the European Council; participating in the European Parliament debates on CFSP matters as well as representing the EU in international institutions.

EU Special Representatives

Since 1996 the European Union has deployed EUSRs to different regions around the world and to different countries based on a specific theme, such as human rights, for example. They support the work of the HR and promote EU's policies and interests; they play an important role when it comes to crisis-management issues in their efforts of consolidating peace, stability and the rule of law in such places like Afghanistan, Horn of Africa, Central Asia or Kosovo, just to name a few (EEAS, 2015).

Other EU institutions

The EEAS is also tasked to provide support and cooperate with the diplomatic activities of the European Council, the European Commission, the European Parliament as well as the diplomatic services of the member-states. The body that defines and provides the general guidelines and principles of the CFSP is the European Council, where the heads of states and governments meet. The steering of EU foreign policy takes place within the Foreign Affairs Council meetings that are chaired by the HR/VP and that bring together the Foreign Ministers of the EU member-states. The EEAS is mandated to implement and follow up on the policies determined by the Council. The cooperation with the European Commission, that is the EU's supranational body, envisions embracing a comprehensive approach in EU foreign policy. The Commission has policy initiative and also links CFSP to other relevant policy issue areas. The HR/VP has responsibility for chairing the monthly meetings of the Commissioners that deal with foreign policy related issues such as trade or development. It was the Commission that established the wide network of

Commission representations and hence, was the first to play the role in EU's external representation abroad. And finally, the HR/VP is responsible to report on both, her activities and on foreign policy matters, to the European Parliament which is directly elected by the citizens. It is the Parliament that has the power to approve the annual budget for CFSP (together with the Council).

Union Delegations

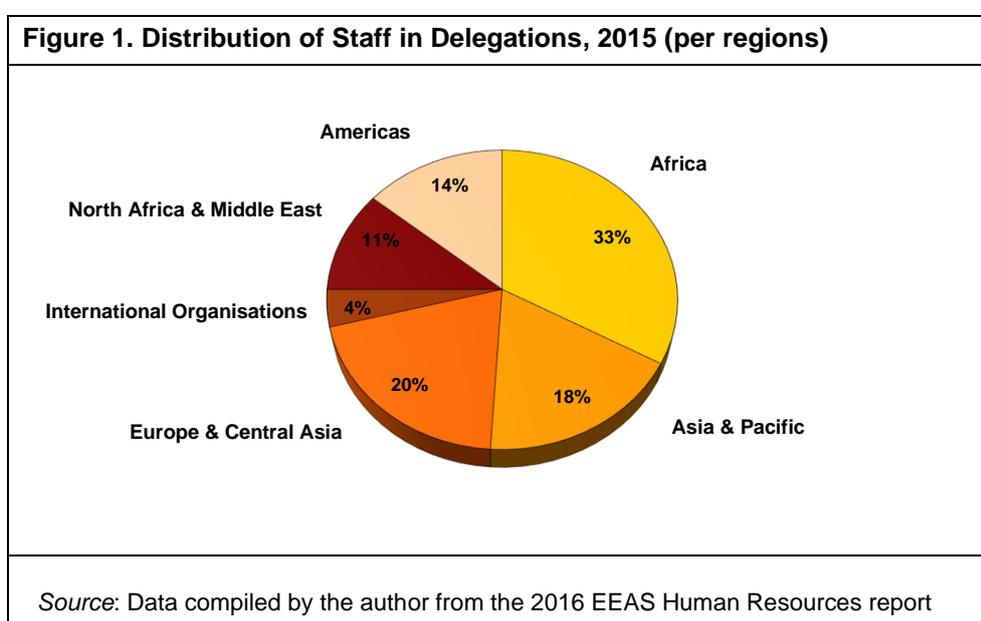
The EEAS in 2015 operated 139 Delegations worldwide (presented in Table 3), out of which 103 were bilateral delegations responsible for the EU's relations with a single country (for example: EU Delegation in Moldova, Ukraine or Belarus), and another 12 – responsible for a group of countries or a region (for example: EU Delegation to China, also responsible for Mongolia); 7 regional delegations, responsible for another delegation (for example: EU Delegation in Senegal, responsible for Gambia); 5 regional delegations dependent from another delegation (for example: EU Delegation in Colombia is dependent from the EU Delegation in Ecuador); 4 representation offices (for example: EU Office in Kosovo) and 8 multilateral delegations to international organisations (for example: to African Union, UN and others).

Type	List of countries			Total number
Bilateral (responsible for single country)	Afghanistan Albania Algeria Angola Argentina Armenia Azerbaijan Bangladesh Belarus Benin Bolivia Bosnia and Herzegovina Botswana Brazil Burkina Faso	Georgia Ghana Guatemala Guinea Guinea-Bissau Haïti Honduras Iceland Iraq Israël Ivory Coast Japan Jordan Kenya Korea Kyrgyzstan	Pakistan Papua New Guinea Paraguay Peru Philippines Russia Rwanda Serbia Sierra Leone Singapore Somalia South Africa South Sudan Sudan Syria Swaziland	103

	Burma/Myanmar Burundi Cambodia Cameroon Canada Cape Verde Central African Republic Chad Chili Congo Rep. Congo Dem. Rep Costa Rica Cuba Djibouti Dominican Republic Egypt El Salvador Eritrea Ethiopia FYROM	Lebanon Lesotho Liberia Lybia Madagascar Malawi Malaysia Mali Mauritania Mexico Moldova Montenegro Morocco Mozambique Namibia Nepal Niger Nigeria Norway	Tajikistan Tanzania Timor-Leste Togo Tunisia Turkey Uganda Ukraine United Arab Emirates United States of America Uruguay Uzbekistan Venezuela Vietnam Yemen Zambia Zimbabwe	
Bilateral (responsible for groups of country or a region)	Barbados China Fiji Gabon India Indonesia Jamaica Kazakhstan Mauritius Saudi Arabia Sri Lanka Switzerland			12
Regional (responsible for another delegation)	Australia → New Zealand Colombia → Ecuador Guyana → Trinidad and Tobago Nicaragua → Office Panama Solomon Islands → Vanuatu Senegal → Gambia Thailand → Laos			7
Regional (dependent from another delegation)	Ecuador ← Colombia Gambia ← Senegal Laos ← Thailand New Zealand ← Australia Trinidad and Tobago ← Guyana			5
Representation offices	In China (Hong Kong) West Bank and Gaza Strip Kosovo Taiwan			4
Multilateral delegations (to	African Union UN			8

international organisations)	WTO OECD/UNESCO FAO-Holy See-Order of Malta CoE UN/IAEA/OSCE ASEAN (covered by the Delegation in Indonesia)	
	Total	139
<i>Source: Data compiled by the author in 2015 based on the information provided on the EEAS website</i>		

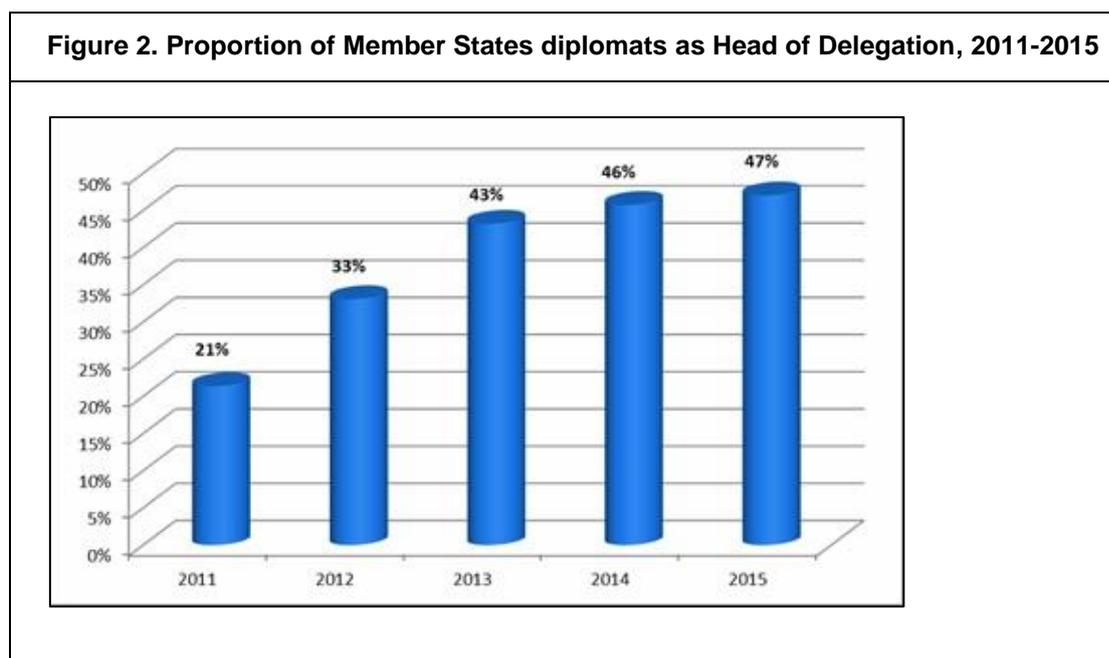
In terms of regional distribution, the 2,261 EEAS staff members were deployed (in 2015) mostly to Africa (33%) and Europe and Central Asia (20%), followed by the other regions as can be seen in Figure 1.



A Delegation may comprise both EEAS and Commission staff, according to the Decision establishing the functioning of the EEAS that specifies that in areas where the Commission exercises powers it may also issue instructions to the HoD. Besides the 2,261 EEAS staff members posted to the Delegations there were another 3,541 staff members of the European Commission working in the Delegations (in 2015 according to EEAS, 2016). A significant number of staff placed in the Delegations were local agents (1,107 members): local agents are employed by the EEAS for manual or service duties and are working in places outside the European Union, according to local law (ibidem). The Delegations also must be able to respond to the needs of the European Parliament. In relation to the member-states, the Delegations are expected to share information and work in close cooperation with the latter as

well as offer support to them in diplomatic matters including consular protection of the citizens of the EU. At the end of 2015 out of 434 seconded national experts (SNEs) in the EEAS 58 were based in the Delegations (13,36%) and the vast majority were “cost-free” (entirely paid by their sending MS).

Within one Delegation, European civil servants, national diplomats and local staff work together under the authority of the Head of Delegation (HoD). It is the HoD that is responsible for the overall management of a Delegation, is in charge of ensuring the coordination of all actions of the EU overseas, has the power to represent the Union and is accountable to the HR/VP. As the Human Resources report shows, at the end of 2015, there were 282 managers in the EEAS, including officials, temporary agents¹⁶ and SNEs¹⁷: 90 staff members occupied middle management posts and 29 staff members occupied senior management posts in Brussels while in the Delegations: 144 occupied middle management and 19 senior management posts. Out of 134 HoDs, 63 posts were occupied by Member State diplomats (this number grew to 47% as Figure 2 shows), of those, 16 were nationals of Member States who joined the Union in 2004, 2007 and 2013 (25%). All EU nationalities were represented at the Head of Delegation level, with the exception of five Member States: Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta and Slovakia (EEAS, 2016).



¹⁶ Temporary Agents in the EEAS are essentially staff seconded from national diplomatic services of the Member States contracted to fill temporarily permanent establishment plan posts in the EEAS.

¹⁷ Seconded National Experts are employed by a national administration and seconded to the EEAS.

Source: Data provided by the 2016 EEAS Human Resources report

Member-states' diplomatic representations

The classic embassies are an old tool of diplomacy, dating back to the mid-1450s, and are until today an important foreign policy means of representation and are involved in activities of negotiation, communication, and engagement with the government and public in the host country, information gathering and sharing as well as consular work (Leguey-Feilleux, 2009; Watson 1983).

Country		
	No. foreign representations worldwide ¹⁸	Out of which total number of embassies
Austria	371	83
Belgium	399	93
Bulgaria	143	74
Croatia	140	54
Cyprus	158	45
Czech Republic	259	88
Denmark	492	74
Estonia	196	34
Finland	438	73
France	721	165
Germany	569	155
Greece	268	84
Hungary	288	77
Ireland	163	58
Italy	661	124
Latvia	171	34
Lithuania	180	39
Luxembourg	156	30
Malta	180	23
Netherlands	446	111
Poland	290	89
Portugal	298	71
Romania	310	92
Slovakia	203	64
Slovenia	111	37

¹⁸ Including consulates, honorary consulates, trade representations and other diplomatic representations (such as offices).

Spain	498	119
Sweden	441	89
United Kingdom	432	149
	<i>highest number of embassies</i>	
	<i>lowest number of embassies</i>	

Source: Data compiled by the author in 2014 based on the websites of the above embassies, their Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the EEAS as well as the www.embassypages.com website.

In third countries, besides Union Delegation there is a wide diplomatic network of MS national embassies – diplomatic representation that allows them to establish and maintain relations outside their national borders. Table 4 above shows that in 2014 France, Germany and Italy were among the member-states that had over 500 foreign representations worldwide; and together with the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Spain had over 100 embassies worldwide.

Overview of the EU diplomatic network in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus

Country	No. foreign representations worldwide ¹⁹	Out of which total number of embassies	MD	UKR	BLR
			Presence		
Austria	371	83		√	√
Belgium	399	93		√	
Bulgaria	143	74	√	√	√
Croatia	140	54		√	
Cyprus	158	45		√	
Czech Republic	259	88	√	√	√
Denmark	492	74		√	
Estonia	196	34	√	√	√
Finland	438	73		√	
France	721	165	√	√	√
Germany	569	155	√	√	√
Greece	268	84		√	
Hungary	288	77	√	√	√
Ireland	163	58			
Italy	661	124	√	√	√
Latvia	171	34	√	√	√
Lithuania	180	39	√	√	√
Luxembourg	156	30			

¹⁹ Including consulates, honorary consulates, trade representations and other diplomatic representations (such as offices).

Malta	180	23			
Netherlands	446	111		√	
Poland	290	89	√	√	√
Portugal	298	71		√	
Romania	310	92	√	√	√
Slovakia	203	64	√	√	√
Slovenia	111	37		√	
Spain	498	119		√	
Sweden	441	89	√	√	√
United Kingdom	432	149	√	√	√
EU	140	140	√	√	√
	<i>no presence</i>				
	<i>highest number of embassies</i>				
	<i>lowest number of embassies</i>				

Source: Data compiled by the author in 2014 and updated in 2015 based on the websites of the above embassies, their Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the EEAS as well as the www.embassypages.com website

The development of the EU diplomatic system comes indeed as an example of challenging the traditional forms of diplomacy while it still relies on stationing of its representatives in host countries, hence adhering to the backbone of diplomacy i.e. posting diplomatic missions to third countries. An overview of the EU diplomatic network worldwide, represented by both the member-state embassies and the EU Delegations, shows that between 2014 and 2017 EU had a growing diplomatic network, comparable to some of the biggest member-states: it ranked fourth (after France, Germany and the United Kingdom) compared to the 28 member states (see Table 5).

Eastern Europe		Staff		
		Commission	EEAS	Total
Countries	Belarus	17	10	27
	Moldova	26	11	37
	Ukraine	74	28	102

Source: Data drawn from Bicchi & Maurer (2018), Table 2, page 16 (staff numbers have been provided to the authors by EEAS staff in March, 2016)

The Lisbon Treaty in particular impacted the former Commission representations and specifically the political dimension of European diplomatic cooperation abroad, it is however interesting to note that the number of EEAS staff by early 2016 in the

Delegations in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus was still lower than that of Commission staff (see Table 6).

In both Belarus and Moldova, the European diplomatic system was represented by member-states and EU diplomatic representations: 15 in Belarus and 15 in Moldova. The diplomatic community is rather small and EU actors play a major role in this community: “we conduct diplomacy on two main levels. One, more concrete, involves dealing with local authorities in the host country and thus developing bilateral relations. And another, a broader one, to try to create a proper climate and atmosphere to serve peace and development, especially for the younger generations to come” (interv. 28). In Belarus, given the geopolitical context of the country and the crisis in Ukraine, diplomacy is about “spreading of national and EU good ideas” within a small group of diplomats “where everyone knows everyone” (interv. 34).

In Ukraine, the EU diplomatic community was represented by almost all member-states, 26 national embassies the EU delegation, with only Ireland, Luxembourg and Malta not having a diplomatic representation in Kiev. Here, the diplomatic community is rather large, and as a result EU diplomatic actors have to always maintain contact, be involved, be competitive and very active in order to be heard and seen. The conduct of diplomacy becomes “a skill that helps maintain foreign relations in a supportive, cooperative manner and we are involved in change-related processes and influences in host countries” (interv. 18). Both an EU and a member-state “diplomat should know what is really going on; to try to influence the situation in order to reach the goals of my country” (interv. 21).

In Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus, both the EU Delegations and the MS embassies carry out the EU’s foreign policy objectives and are involved in exporting EU rules and norms. Developing an extensive diplomatic presence worldwide should add value to the EU’s efforts in its neighbourhood. Whereas the set-up of the EU’s diplomatic architecture secures it with presence and representation, central to this thesis is its performance. On the background of progress in certain areas of foreign policy (areas like deploying operations under the ESDP/CSDP), scholars emphasize the issue of the ‘*coordination reflex*’ (White 2001) which underlines that there may or may not be a collective commitment issue not only to reach agreements but to effectively coordinate actions. In the following section, central to the discussion is

what the EU professes and how it achieves it beyond its borders and specifically in Eastern Europe. Such an analysis is key in order to show the symptoms of the problems of EU actorness in Eastern Europe and propose how EU diplomacy might be relevant to overcoming these, labelled below as foreign policy dilemmas, through proposing a set of working assumptions.

2.3. EU foreign policy dilemmas in Eastern Europe

Central to the discussion in this section is *what* the EU professes vs. *how* it achieves it beyond its borders (Wood 2009). The analysis below emphasizes that in its immediate neighbourhood the EU's actorness faces challenges that entrap it in certain foreign policy dilemmas. The EU and its member states are wobbling between the choices of values vs. interest-driven decisions, problems of collective action and choices of markets and institutions vs geopolitics. These challenges used to drive MS and EU institutions apart in the past and are still relevant today. Given the changes related to the EU diplomatic actorness proposed by the Lisbon Treaty, the general expectation in this thesis is that a successful diplomatic actor should manage to solve or bypass the three dilemmas through the practice of diplomacy. Hence this section concludes with a set of working assumptions on how EU diplomacy might be relevant in overcoming these dilemmas.

2.3.1. EU actorness entrapped in foreign policy dilemmas

An analytical evaluation of the literature on EU's effects in the neighbourhood allows us to identify three main foreign policy dilemmas that EU is confronted with. The reluctance of member states to submit certain areas of decision-making to the EU level, the issue of coordination of positions and cooperation, deployment of humanitarian assistance are just a few from a range of EU foreign policy dilemmas. Pruitt and Kim (2004) describe dilemmas in foreign policy as certain "trade-offs among the [...] strategies, in the sense that choosing one of them makes choosing the others less likely" (p. 39 as cited in Feste, 2011). Foreign policy dilemmas often arise from a need to seek balance between objectives and resources, means and aims, long-term and short-term solutions (ibidem). Weighed against their costs, benefits, appropriateness and legitimacy, these choices lay the foundation of a

strategic approach to the foreign policy (Missiroli 2010). Notably, it is in the EU context that foreign policy dilemmas present themselves particularly prominently due to the complexity of the EU's institutional architecture, its deep embeddedness into international processes and policies and unresolved issues of the EU's identity in world politics (Keukeleire & MacNaughtan 2008; Hill & Smith 2011).

Values vs interests

This dilemma is straight-forward in portraying the conflicting nature of the relationship between normative and material dimensions of the EU's external relations. Whereas the dilemma is straightforward it is not that simple to distinguish analytically between values and interests as these may be seen as part of the same competition for priority especially in bringing stability and security on the EU's borders. Nonetheless, the distinction sheds light on a specific dichotomy in EU external relations pertaining to the goals of its policies (Carlsnaes, 2008): while the EU more often than not defines the objectives of its external policies within the ENP, when it comes to action, those normative principles are frequently downplayed by competing (economic) interests (Carothers, 2011; Youngs, 2004; Lappin, 2010). This is especially important in the Eastern neighbourhood, as the EU justifies its policies in the region with a discourse of 'shared values' and 'joint ownership'. The EU is trying to balance between the two despite the general tendency of how MS may agree on general and common EU goals such as democracy or human rights; fundamentally they may disagree on the mechanisms of achieving them (Smith 2011). Although it can be argued that the EU can "[perform] effectively in the pursuit of some material interests" (Thomas, 2010, p. 3), the pursuit of these interests should not discredit or prevail over the values. Research on the ENP questions the extent to which EU is value-driven or interest-driven in its policy and whether the latter reflects on EU's emphasis on political values rather than economic ones (Bosse, 2007). Findings show that the 'value dimension' of the ENP is due to "strategic bargaining and trade-offs between the member-states and between the member-states and EU institutions, rather than a wider EU-level agreement on a set of shared political values" (ibidem, p. 58); which links back to EU's stated commitment to 'shared values' while offering everything 'but the institutions' to its neighbours. This offers room for the EU's ambiguous approach in external relations

especially when the democracy promotion agenda is pursued alongside other EU agendas on economic interest, security and strategic diplomacy (Cardwell 2011; Kurki 2012). Values and interests are cornerstone categories of foreign policy strategies that lie at the centre of the long debates between (neo)liberal and (neo)realist camps in International Relations. While the EU more often than not defines the objectives of its external policies as promotion of the principles of democracy and rule of law, effective multilateralism and cooperation, when it comes to action those normative principles are frequently downplayed by competing economic and security concerns (Youngs 2004; Bosse 2007; Carothers 2011; Gawrich et al. 2010; Wetzel 2011).

The trade-off between value and interest-based considerations might damage severely the credibility of EU actorness in Eastern Europe. For example, recent research on external governance hypothesizes that the efficiency of rule-transfer is dependent on the embedding of democratic rules, norms and principles in the EU acquis; or on the trans-governmental interactions between the EU and its international partners in third countries (Lavenex & Shimmelfening 2011). This implies that the EU is a credible legal actor perceived likewise by the international actors that interact with it. Research indirectly raises questions of EU credibility in the way in which it designed ENP tools – the Action Plans – in vaguer terms, with unclear finality or link between the EU conditions and rewards (Casier 2011a). Or, while the EU seems to be willing to offer more ‘tangible rewards’ via the ENP’s Eastern dimension, the Eastern Partnership (EaP) financial support is limited or is not yet made available and the finality of it remains ambiguous (Casier 2011a; Schmidtke & Chira-Pascanut 2011). This ‘politics of half-open door’ (Timmermann 2003 as cited in Schmidtke & Chira-Pascanut (2011)) highlights the issue of EU credibility. On top of this, the emphasis in research on the geopolitical and economic interests that prevail over the ‘shared values’ of democracy and human rights stipulated in the ENP further draws attention to issues of EU credibility (Belyi 2012; Bosse 2007, 2009; Gawrich et al., 2010; Wetzel, 2011 and others). This is especially important in Eastern European countries such as Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus where the EU justifies its policies with a reference to ‘shared values’ and ‘joint ownership’.

Cardwell (2011) explains how the EU, through the Treaty of Lisbon, embraced a mandate of democracy promotion as a foreign policy objective in relation to neighbouring countries as it aims to establish good neighbourliness and prosperity based on the EU's values. Several observations are noteworthy from the author's analysis of EU's democracy promotion in external relations. First, this is done without providing a clear definition of 'democracy' (ibidem). Second, the 'common' or 'shared' values discourse is questionable, as "the nature of what values are 'shared' can be varied according to the EU's own interests" (p. 25). And third, the EU is more likely to be successful if it successfully exports its model of democracy, as in the long-term, the EU benefits from stability and economic prosperity of its neighbours around the world. In mapping out EU democracy promotion in action, Cardwell (2011) identifies two tendencies. One refers to a positive form of democracy promotion, meaning improving some aspects of democracy and human rights in neighbour countries through use of conditionality. This can be done expressly, through its policies/measures, or implied – when the EU projects the vision of democracy/democratic standards without having it as a particular aim. The second one refers to a negative form of democracy promotion, that applies the same logic of conditionality as in the positive form, but applying sanctions when a third state does not rectify the situation. This is also done by the EU expressly – suspending aid, imposing sanctions and using human rights clauses in its agreements; or implicitly (more difficult to identify) - using conditionality indirectly "by implying to a third state that relations could be improved by following the example of its neighbouring states" (p. 29). Whichever form the EU chooses to apply it is still criticised for "the double standards in EU democracy support, the weaknesses of the existing structures in pushing for democracy, and the continuing rigidities in the EU's civil society support" (Kurki 2012, p. 6).

Problems of collective action

The focus of this dilemma is on member states. Research emphasizes the importance of EU collective international action for the "European states to make an effective impact on the shaping of global politics" (Whitman & Juncos 2009, p.6) and brings forward evidence regarding the EU's potential for collective action and success in maintaining solidarity (Smith 2006; Stewart 2010). Yet, EU collective

action towards other actors is exposed to the negative effects of member states' autonomous moves. Hence, "when member states disagree, or are at cross purposes, this can be a disaster for EU" (Stewart 2010, p.15). Although the idea of the CFSP upgraded by the Lisbon Treaty was to spur convergence of MS' interests that should lead to collective action, the reality often shows the opposite. When important national interests are at stake member states often opt to avoid EU-level instruments and act unilaterally in external relations (Hill 1998; Rummel & Wiedermann 1998; Smith 2006; Keukeleire & MacNaughtan 2008; Thomas 2010). Moreover, in their bilateral policies towards third countries member states might even find themselves in competition with each other (Youngs 2009; Youngs 2011; Casier 2011b). Bilateral policies and divergent approaches towards third countries, regions or international organisations may significantly undermine the common EU policy and, consequently, the EU's impact in those settings. In this sense, a common vision (a vision channelled in terms of actions) towards one country or one region in the perspective of minimization of the negative effects of the bilateral relations is crucial. As emphasized by a group of scholars this relates to the extent to which the EU can reach internal agreement and then project it and support it through actions accordingly; acting as one in bilateral or multilateral settings remains an important indicator of the EU's performance internationally (Laatikainen & Smith 2006). In evaluating the EU's global role, Stewart (2010) concludes that in relation to certain partners like China or Russia, there is lack of consensus among member-states, the latter maintain bilateral relations with them that are not aligned to the EU's bilateral strategy "and a weak EU diplomacy in the face of powerful states espousing a fundamentally different world view to that of the EU" (p. 16). Assessing the EU's response to the Libyan crisis, Koenig's (2011) research shows that "nearly every aspect of it was marked by vertical incoherence" (p. 28), i.e. mini-lateral action undertaken by certain MS that showed inconsistencies with the diplomatic course agreed upon at EU level. Whether it is the EU's relations with its strategic partners, like Russia or China or other neighbours from the ENP countries, the EU's performance in international politics depends on its internal cohesiveness: "if there is a consolidated internal actor identity, there should also follow some sort of external actorship, having more or less impact in different places and issue areas" (Hettne 2008, p.2).

Rule-transfer vs geopolitics

The third dilemma is related to the EU's geopolitical identity in world politics. It refers to the debated issue of EU's ontological choice between geopolitical and market based solutions in relation to other actors in a particular region (Casier 2011c; Belyi 2012; Kazantsev 2012; Grevi 2012). It is argued that in its dealings with external actors the EU is balancing between a pragmatic, even technical, cooperation driven by economic considerations and legalistic approach, and an increasing necessity to accommodate its geopolitical role if the EU wants to be more influential (Youngs 2007; Youngs 2009; Thomas 2010; Vasilyan 2011; Bosse & Schmidt-Felzmann 2011). In practice, the EU lacks pan-European market mechanisms in energy²⁰, for instance, and if MS deliberate on energy security they do so as a state-led priority instead of a European one while masking geopolitical trends in rule-based discourse (Youngs 2007). It can also be assumed that the EU's inability or unwillingness to assume a strong geopolitical posture might negatively affect its credibility among partners and hence diminish EU's impact. For example, earlier studies on EU governance and the relationship with its neighbours explain that EU external governance is conditioned, inter alia, by security *reasons*; it is the concern about security at EU borders that defined ENP's focus, inter alia, on justice and home affairs, environmental and energy policy (Lavenex 2004). This is explained through the 'geopolitical boundary' and the 'legal/institutional boundary', identified by Smith (1996), both of which feature the export of EU rule of law outside its borders based on security considerations, institutional contacts and a 'community of law'. Other studies (Gänzle 2008; Bengtsson 2008) follow up this observation and reiterate that the EU-ENP relationship is also influenced by the EU's geopolitical boundary, in particular by the shape of the EU-Russia relationship. These observations point to the geopolitical position of the region of Eastern Europe. It is in the Russian sphere of influence; the EU's Eastern neighbours were a part of the Soviet Union or the

²⁰ In order to show the dichotomous dynamic of this dilemma, energy is chosen as one of the most prominent examples when it comes to Eastern European neighbours and is one of the key dimensions of interest in EU-ENP relations (Bosse, 2011). It is of utmost importance for this dilemma as, on the one hand, EU MS are dependent on Russia in this area as well as Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus, to whom Russia provide loans and subsidises energy supplies, and grant access to the regional market (Bosse, 2012).

Soviet bloc for 45 years and still remain under Russia's close watch and sphere of interest.

The inverse of this statement is relevant in this case: additional involvement of international actors (such as the Russian Federation in a region of its own interest like Eastern Europe) who are usually non-supportive of the EU can counterbalance EU's rule-transfer efforts. Dimitrova and Dragneva (2009) indicate in their research that in the EU-Ukraine relationship, the Russian Federation, having particular leverage power over Ukrainian politics, influences rule-transfer. Or as Schmidtke and Chira-Pascanut (2011) point out, recently, the EU agenda in the former Soviet Union states is contended by the Russian one. These geopolitical observations have been only sporadically mentioned and have not been thoroughly examined when analysing EU rule-transfer to the ENP countries. Some argue that the EU "should devise a proactive strategy and act upon it, irrespective of the ramifications this may have on the relations with such powers as Russia and/or the United States" (Vasilyan 2011, p. 357). In relation to the Russian Federation for example, by assuming a greater geopolitical role and tying its energy relations with Russia to its foreign policy objectives the EU can resist Russia's 'energy weapon'. Moreover, through engaging in realpolitik the EU can send the right signals to Moscow that when it comes to issues of strategic importance, it is Brussels, and not member states' capitals, which the Kremlin needs to negotiate with.

This is not to propose that the EU should abandon or underplay its wide and beneficial cooperation with Russia. It is to say that rather than constantly looking at its common neighbours in Eastern Europe through the lens of Russian interests, the EU needs to shape its actions in the region in line with its policies and design its instruments accordingly. If the EU's approach to Eastern Europe is based on rule-transfer, then emphasis on democracy promotion in official rhetoric alone does not suffice, especially when "EU energy security concerns have also been driving the European Commission to develop even closer ties [with Eastern neighbours]" (Bosse, 2011, p. 451). For example, the EU's political rapprochement with Belarus coincides with EU's growing dependence on Russian energy and on the background of Russia-Ukraine gas crises (as described in Chapter 6).

2.3.2. Use of diplomacy to deal with foreign policy dilemmas: working assumptions

The three dilemmas presented above reflect three ambiguities of EU international actorness; ambiguities that arise during the EU's interactions in international politics. These ambiguities or symptoms of EU actorness link back to prerequisites of EU international actorness and the functions of diplomacy. They show that the EU has major challenges to overcome related to its goals (values vs. interests), to achieving coherence and convergence in actions (problem of collective action) and related to its political stamina and the range of instruments it uses (markets and institutions vs geopolitics). The Lisbon Treaty was intended to address these challenges in foreign policy via, inter alia, setting a new institutional framework. This framework brings together EU external policy tools within the EEAS through which a unification of the diplomatic efforts of the European Commission, the Council Secretariat and that of the EU member states (MS). In this manner the Treaty sets out to answer to the key international challenges and claims to establish the basis for more effective and coherent external action. This is due to the developments in EU's external action of creating the EU's diplomatic arm, the EEAS. Hence the central question of this thesis arises: *to what extent has the EU developed as a successful diplomatic actor after the inauguration of the EEAS?* As already noted, the general expectation in this sense is that a successful diplomatic actor should manage to solve or bypass the three dilemmas through the practice of diplomacy. The unpacking of the analytical and methodological problems of understanding success is a challenging undertaking. Therefore having set an exploratory research design allows us to propose a set of assumptions as a research instrument (explained in detail in the methodology section 1.3 of the Introduction.) which are not statistically tested but provide for a certain mode of associative relationships (Patidar, 2013).

1) Post-Lisbon EU diplomacy with an institutional distinctiveness is able to articulate its own stated objectives

Analysing an actor's performance can be based on an evaluation of their specific tasks, policies and procedures (Gutner & Thompson 2010; Cohen & Levinthal 1990; Zahra & George 2002). This allows the examination of how narrow functions are performed and whether these have been successfully executed. The values vs

interests dilemma clearly identified a conflicting nature between material and normative dimensions of EU external actions. A way to address this is to go back to the goals and objectives set by the EU. For instance, the EU's own 'horizontal' strategies (Treaties) and/or country-specific agreements (European Neighbourhood Policy, Association Agreements) often contain a set of objectives whose fulfilment can be used as a measure of its success. These are officially presented in declarations of the European Council and/or key policy announcements by senior EU officials. Clearly explaining the EU's goals, fostering their understanding in third countries is part of the EU's public diplomacy strategy. On the ground especially diplomacy becomes the tool for the EU to secure its set objectives.

The expectation of this assumption is, first of all, that on the ground the Union Delegation fully embraces its diplomatic function of representation in all aspects of external relations, on the one hand. It also implies, on the other hand, that MS' diplomatic representations on the ground are perfectly comfortable with such a distribution of roles. The flaws of the pre-Lisbon institutional system are often linked to the lack of continuity and leadership. The system of rotating Presidencies implied that third parties had to constantly adjust to the new interlocutors, which usually impacted negatively on EU visibility and created an institutional chaos for the Council Secretariat to bridge the gaps or address inconsistencies (Vanhoonacker & Pomorska 2016). In third countries, while some Presidencies were able to show strong leadership, others lacked resources or were reluctant to engage (Baltag & Smith, 2015). Therefore, in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus, the EU, as a successful diplomatic actor, should acknowledge the importance of a strong non-fragmented leadership and strengthen EU continuity in external relations.

Besides the Lisbon Treaty, the ENP becomes an obvious key reference point for this assumption as it is the umbrella-framework for the official relations between the EU and Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. The EU leadership, with the creation of the EEAS, has yet again singled out the ENP as one of the three priorities for the EU's international relations (Ashton 2010). The way in which EU's evolving institutional ecosystem has affected the articulation and execution of EU policy in Eastern Europe has not been clear cut. Following the attribution of legal personality to the EU via the Lisbon Treaty, the EU Delegations are designed to communicate "values, policies and results of its projects toward third country stakeholders" (Duke 2013, p.

25) as the latter now represent the combined interests of the EU's external action. Hence, second of all, the expectation of this assumption is that in Eastern Europe, there is an ability of European and national institutions (*i.e.* EU Delegation and MS embassies) to implement the ENP's set policy goals of promoting democratic governance in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus.

2) The changes in post-Lisbon diplomacy imply convergence of member states actions and build up coherence

The importance of cohesion has been reaffirmed by the Lisbon Treaty and also emphasized by EU's second High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, at her European Parliament hearing (European Parliament 2014) and is central in the political guidelines of the Juncker-led Commission (Commission 2014b). Divergence of member states' interests and that of interests among Brussels institutions is the most cited reason for the dysfunctionalities of the EU's strategy in international politics. The literature emphasizes the importance of EU collective international action for the "European states to make an effective impact on the shaping of global politics" (Whitman and Juncos 2009, p.6) and brings forward evidence regarding the EU's potential for collective action and success in maintaining solidarity (Smith 2006; Stewart 2010; White 2001). The collective action dilemma has emphasized these issues showing how disagreement among member-states or member-states and the EU can be detrimental to the EU. For example, the cases of crisis management in the context of the ENP (*i.e.* Moldova, Ukraine or Belarus) have highlighted the predicament of collective action based on unanimity (Ker-Lindsay 2015, 2014; Papadimitriou & Petrov 2012; Whitman & Wolff, 2010). Moreover, this is at the core of the Lisbon Treaty itself which aims at greater coherence (*i.e.* strengthening EU coordination in external relations) which is to be achieved specifically through the cooperation between the member states' diplomatic missions and the EU delegations in third countries (Article 32 and 35 TEU and 221 TFEU).

Against this background, the expectation of this assumption is that, for the EU as a diplomatic actor, acting collectively should become especially relevant since there is a direct emphasis on cooperation among EU Delegations and MS embassies on the

ground. This implies that as a successful diplomatic actor the EU relies on the practice of multilateral diplomacy where cooperation is key. It is not only in Brussels that the EEAS linked national and EU diplomatic efforts but also on the ground and expectations are high in relation to this cooperation. In this sense it is assumed that EU diplomatic actors in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus (*i.e.* EU Delegations and MS embassies) are engaging in a set of diplomatic practices that facilitate their cooperation towards formulating and implementing a 'common approach' as the Lisbon Treaty expects. Therefore, the upgraded structural development by the Lisbon Treaty should have spurred convergence on the ground in a manner that leads to collective action.

3) The level of supranational activism through post-Lisbon diplomacy strengthens EU capabilities

In order to exert and reach a successful performance in international affairs the EU has at its disposal various instruments. These instruments define "how, who and within which organizational structures to do things in order to attain the defined goals and objectives" (Lenschow et al., 2005, p. 805) as well as the ability to adapt to change, assimilate new information and use this for innovation (Cohen & Levinthal 1990; Zahra & George 2002). The rule-transfer vs geopolitics dilemma exposed EU's conflicting nature in choice of mechanisms in third countries – economic and legalistic versus geopolitical ones – that more often than not does not play to its advantage. Still, the external institutional capacity of the Union, in the context of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), has improved. The process has accelerated further since the Treaty of Lisbon and the creation of the EEAS. With the EEAS, the EU's institutional design was meant to help strengthen the European Union on the global stage, give it more profile, and enable it to project its interests and values more efficiently (Treaty, 2007). The foundation of the EEAS as a new institution – referred to as the EU's diplomatic arm – meant the upgrade of Commission representations, already present in third countries, to Union Delegations. The establishment of the Service brought together the diplomatic dimension from the European Commission, the Council and the Member States under the umbrella of one institution; an institution that comes to represent the diplomatic service of the EU on the ground via these Delegations (and its

cooperation with MS embassies). It was clear that the idea behind the Lisbon Treaty in relation to the EU in external relations was to transfer diplomatic tasks to one institution with the goal of creating a coherent and effective structure.

Taking this into consideration, the expectation of this working assumption is that a successful EU diplomatic actor may bypass or solve the aforementioned dilemmas through manifesting strong capabilities on the ground. Here EU diplomatic capabilities should presume a strong diplomatic esprit de corps as creating a common European diplomatic culture within the Delegations and the institutional turf-wars have been much contested (Juncos & Pomorska, 2014; Duke, 2016 and others). As scholars noted, diplomacy depends upon “personal relations, common experiences and mutual knowledge” (Mendez de Vigo, 2002, p. 6 as cited in Duke, 2016), therefore competences and knowledge are central to this assumption. Furthermore, it is not only representing the EU on the ground that matters here, but also the way the communication function of diplomacy is embraced: information is key in the accumulation of diplomatic capital on the ground and renders an actor its influence (Adler-Niessen, 2008). In this sense, the Treaty expects an increased degree of information exchange among the EU Delegations and MS embassies on the ground (art. 35). Hence, the expectation of this assumption is that the EU delegations play a central role as an informational network hub in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus.

2.4. Conclusion

This chapter has unwrapped the prerequisites of the European Union’s development as an international actor and highlighted certain issues in the way the EU embraces these prerequisites: such as the EU combining its civilian approach with soft imperialism and a sort of pragmatism. It remains criticised for MS still not speaking with one voice, for not claiming its geopolitical role or for applying double standards - promoting values while pursuing certain interests. The changes in EU foreign policy that came with the inauguration of the EEAS and the upgrade to Union Delegations come in parallel to the foreign policy dilemmas that the EU has been facing in neighbouring countries to the East such as Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. This analysis showed how EU actorness faces specific challenges that entrap it in three

foreign policy dilemmas presented in the third section. In terms of diplomatic actorness the European Union is present and involved in international affairs via its network of 139 Delegations as shown in the second section of the chapter. Developing such an extensive diplomatic presence worldwide should add value to EU's efforts in its neighbourhood and facilitate dealing with these dilemmas. The upgrade to Union Delegations implies that the Delegations represent the Union, that they cooperate with MS embassies on the ground, exchange information and contribute to formulating and implementing the 'common approach' together with MS embassies. Taking this into consideration, this chapter concludes with three working assumptions that generally show how we expect the EU, as a successful diplomatic actor, to solve or bypass the three dilemmas through diplomacy. Therefore, the next chapter details an analytical framework to answer the general research question of this thesis - 'to what extent has the EU developed as a successful diplomatic actor after the inauguration of the EEAS?' – and will offer the analytical tools for the revision of the working assumptions in Chapter 7. The analytical framework operationalises three criteria that served as reference points in collecting the empirical evidence presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Chapter 3. Analysing EU diplomatic performance

The issue of the EU's performance in the 'wider Eastern Europe' remains poignant, not least because of current developments in its 'neighbourhood' (such as the crisis in Ukraine or Moldova's downturn from success story to a captured state), the uneven pattern of reform across some of the recently admitted states (such as the turmoil in Hungary or the ongoing monitoring of Bulgaria and Romania in the area of rule of law), and the evident slow pace of progress and even back-sliding in parts of the Western Balkans (e.g. Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia). These cases, inter alia, illustrate that the EU's performance in the area is neither linear nor uncontested; questions regarding EU performance thus persist. Performance has been a salient issue on the agenda of European policy-makers and remains a recurrent theme in the EU's policies and treaties. The European institutions have placed a great emphasis on the performance and ultimate effect of their policies. Much of the EU's own discourse puts emphasis on 'performance' as a key driver of its policies and engagement with its partners (Commission 2008, 2011, 2015a). In parallel, the scholarly literature on EU performance generally questions to what extent the EU addresses the most important challenges and whether its instruments are fit for that purpose. With a ring of instability that surrounds the EU from the Eastern Europe to the Caucasus, the Middle East and the Horn of Africa, European diplomacy is in great demand and perennial questions regarding EU (diplomatic) performance arise.

This thesis questions '*To what extent has the EU developed as a successful diplomatic actor after the inauguration of the EEAS?*' To critically assess EU diplomatic performance in its immediate neighbourhood in the East, namely in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus, the analytical framework relies mainly on two sets of literature – the one on organisational performance and the one on the 'practice turn' in IR and EU studies. To analyse and assess success is a notoriously challenging task. The analytical framework therefore borrows from organizational performance literature. Organizational performance focuses on practice as the unit of analysis in order to *evaluate*: to assess the clarity of the objectives and the vision of an actor. This allows us to *understand* the direction of the implementation of these objectives and to reflect on how much progress has been made towards the goals. A

performance exercise entails *learning* to the same extent about what is working and what is not. This ultimately may lead to *improving*, which comes with the capacity to adopt and adapt as a performance exercise explores the variety of organisational practices (Behn, 2003; Pidd, 2012).

The body of literature that deals with the EU and diplomacy as a set of practices, of interest to this thesis, is the practice turn in IR and EU studies that is part of the analytical framework. Scholars put an emphasis on the importance of looking at practices especially because it allows us to uncover everyday practices that are not, usually, the focus of scholarly research (Adler and Pouilot, 2011). A practice-oriented approach, hence, gives the opportunity to understand what is happening on the ground (Adler-Nissen, 2016) or, more specifically, to discover the relationship between EU and national level diplomacy in third countries. Since there is limited scholarly knowledge on what is happening in diplomacy on the ground, incorporating practices in this analytical framework will allow us to discover practices that are of importance to our general knowledge for the EU diplomatic performance.

Furthermore, organisational studies, more generally, are interested in what people actually do. As some argue, coupling a practice turn with organisational studies can “bring new ways of seeing and new questions to ask” (Simpson, 2009). For organisational studies scholars, a practice turn becomes a bridge for different levels of analysis: “from the very micro (what people say and do); to the meso (routines); to the macro (institutions)” (Miettinen et al., 2009, p. 1309).

When talking about European diplomatic performance abroad, the focus is on practices, as the modern definition of diplomacy also identifies it. The examination of EU’s success (or failure) is based on its overall performance in the region of Eastern Europe and is not based on the evaluation of the success or failure in one policy area or another. Especially since scholars have outlined EU’s capacity to influence its external environment (Allen & Smith, 1990; Ginsberg, 2001; Hettne, 2011; Wunderlich, 2011); this thesis focuses on the external dimension of EU actorness, on its actions and achievements. Therefore, the analytical purpose here is not to study the cause-effect relationship, but rather the dimensions of everyday diplomatic practices in third countries: ‘how things are supposed to be, and the political universe of how they very often actually are’ (Sharp, 1999). In this thesis, looking at

performance implies examining and evaluating EU diplomatic practices against pre-set goals. It also allows us to explore the relation between national and EU level in the new post-Lisbon setting, where the EUDs perform traditional and new diplomatic functions: representing the Union and also cooperating with national embassies. And lastly, it allows us to conduct a screening of capabilities and to understand how these pertain to the diplomatic realm.

This chapter first conceptualises the notion of performance before operationalising the criteria for assessing performance. It then reviews the practice turn in international relations and EU studies and shows how it links to the performance approach. The chapter concludes with the operationalisation of three criteria: effectiveness, relevance and capabilities. This operationalization is adapted from the organisational studies (performance) literature (Lusthaus et al., 2002 and others) and the practice turn in IR/EU studies literature (Adler and Pouliot, 2011 and others).

3.1. Performance: definitions, approaches and perspectives

The rationale behind studying EU performance in international politics stems from the academic debate which calls for increasing focus on the EU's results and achievements in world affairs (Ginsberg 2001; Mahncke 2011). So far the scholarly research dedicated to exploring and unpacking the notion of EU performance has been scarce. Notable examples include the studies that analyse EU performance in multilateral institutions (Oberthür *et al.* 2013; Jørgensen & Laatikainen 2013). More common, however, is the focus on EU impact, EU role performance, EU legitimacy and EU effectiveness in international affairs (Smith 2000; Ginsberg 2001; Van Schaik 2013; Elgström and Smith 2006; Bickerton 2007; Smith 2010b; Vasilyan 2011; Smith 2013b; Romanyshyn 2015; Baltag and Smith 2015). Much of the literature has linked EU performance to EU effectiveness (a subset of the wider notion of performance), emphasizing that increasing effectiveness may render the EU more legitimate in the eyes of both its member-states and its partners (Edwards 2013; Bouchard et al. 2013; Smith 2013a; Bretherton & Vogler 2013; Smith 2010b; Lavanex & Schimmelfennig 2011; Börzel & Risse 2007). Externally, scholars have examined the EU's performance in major multilateral settings such as the United Nations (UN), the World bank (WB) or the International Labour Organisation (ILO)

(Oberthür & Groen 2015; Jørgensen et al. 2013), during negotiations in different policy settings (Romanyshyn 2015; Dee 2015; van Schaik 2013) or more recently investigated EU diplomatic performance (Baltag & Smith 2015; Baltag, 2018).

Performance is one of the key terms transgressing different intra and inter-disciplinary boundaries. It has been defined in comparative politics as a way to measure the performance of political institutions in Western democracies (Eckstein, 1971; Keman, 2002; Roller, 2005) or the management of governments (Ingraham et al., 2003). The concept has been widely used in policy sciences (Howlett & Ramesh, 1995; Peters & Pierre, 2006) mainly as a way to measure performance management (Bouckaert & Halligan 2006). The dictionary-based definition of performance emphasizes the complexity of studying performance in general: it implies performing a task or a function as well as the capabilities of a system to perform these tasks and how successfully they are performed (according to the Oxford Dictionary). For an organisation, performance implies that a task is done effectively, efficiently, in a relevant manner to its stakeholders, and maintains financial viability (Lusthaus et al. 2002). Others see performance as “an organisation’s ability to achieve agreed-upon objectives” (Gutner & Thompson, 2010, p. 231). For a political system, performance implies an evaluation of the system, namely of its outputs (Almond et al. 1996, Eckstein 1971); and the capacity of the system to convert inputs effectively into outputs. As Roller (2005) emphasizes, performance refers to the dimension of action. This implies the action of carrying out a task and how well it is executed. In other words the study of performance implies examining the outcome produced and the process – the effort, efficiency and capabilities used to accomplish the outcome.

Performance measurement and evaluation is central to public administration and organisational studies literature. In general terms, performance is conceived as a process of an actor executing a task or function. Scholars of public policy and comparative politics define the concept as a way to measure: the performance of political institutions in Western democracies, the management of governments, or performance management (Keman 2002; Ingraham et al. 2003; Peters & Pierre 2006; Howlett & Ramesh 1995; Bouckaert & Halligan 2006). The manner in which performance is assessed frequently depends on the eye of the beholder: an insider’s viewpoint is operationalised in cooperation with internal actors and tends to be prescriptive in character, whereas an outsider’s perspective is more distanced,

backward-looking and concerned with the relative success of policies or actions (Versluis *et al.* 2011). Performance auditors widely rely on an input-output model of process management derived from economics (Neely 2004). Accordingly, public agencies are evaluated with respect to the amount and type of resources (time, finances, expertise and other assets) that are transformed in an organised way into a product of an added value. The results of this transformation process include both tangible products or outputs (number of clients served) and rather diffused outcomes (improved quality of a service). The same holds true for political systems: performance implies an evaluation of outputs, outcomes, as well as the process – the effort, efficiency, and capabilities used to accomplish the outcome (Eckstein 1971; Roller 2015).

Acknowledging the difficulties of defining performance, this thesis conceptualizes performance in broader terms, incorporating both the outcome and the process of achieving that outcome. The aim here is to go beyond the positivist explanations and to explore the details of everyday practices that form and shape the performance of any actor. As Adler-Niessen (2016) emphasizes the practice turn “has had considerable success in organisation and management studies” (p. 88), it looks into the meaningful patterns of action and hence, draws attention to the significance of everyday practices in analysing the EU. Practice is not reduced to the implementation of a theoretical model and actions do not necessarily pave the way for a premeditated design: “practice can be oriented toward a goal without being consciously informed by it” (Pouillot, 2008, p. 261). Coupling organisational studies with the practice turn in IR and EU studies, as elaborated in the following section, puts into perspective our understanding of how performance actually works, in practice.

3.2. The practice turn in IR and EU studies

Studying diplomacy and more specifically the micro-practices and everyday conduct and management of international relations raise an important research avenue into the building blocks of world politics. The study of international practices is significant as it allows us to focus on what practitioners do; and uncovers the many faces of world politics which is “made up of a myriad of everyday practices that too often get

overlooked in scholarly research” (Adler and Pouliot, 2011, p. 2). As Bicchi and Bremberg (2016) point out, it is with the turn to practices that research can understand ‘the big picture’ via the ‘stories’, the details from those stories and via conducting ‘slow research’ (Bicchi & Bremberg, 2016; Kuus, 2015). Even more so, a practice-based research has the capacity to describe important details and features of global politics as something that is routinely made and remade in practice (Nicolini & Monteiro, 2017). It uncovers aspects of everyday European integration both ‘from above’ and ‘from below’ and provides us with a deeper understanding of this process (Adler-Nissen, 2016). The added value of practice-oriented studies is in uncovering what is happening “‘on the ground’ in apparently trivial moves that turn out to be crucial for European integration” (ibidem, p. 99).

Whereas in international relations the ‘practice turn’ started from understanding textual practices, this thesis subscribes to the definition of practices understood as ‘competent performance’ which incorporates both actions and behaviour thus including the material dimension of a deed performed and the meaning of that deed (Adler & Pouliot, 2011). As Adler and Pouliot (2011) conceptualise, “practices are socially meaningful patterns of action, which, in being performed more or less competently, simultaneously embody, act out, and possibly reify background knowledge and discourse in and on the material world” (p. 4). This is to say that practices rely on background knowledge and the interplay between material and discursive worlds: practices, therefore, structure interaction via communication as well as material artefacts and accumulated knowledge. In this way, practices are conceptualised as “patterned actions that are embedded in particular organised contexts and, as such, are articulated into specific types of action and are socially developed through learning and training” (Corradi et al., 2010 as cited in Adler & Pouliot, 2011). Understood in terms of performance, practices are not identical to preferences or beliefs, they have patterns, i.e. occurring over time and space, that structure interaction among actors. When defining practices as performance, scholars explain that a practice is identified by history, social constituency and perceivable normative dimension (Nicolini & Monteiro 2017) and can be more or less competent or can be done correctly or incorrectly (Adler & Pouliot, 2011). EU performance can therefore be measured not only by looking at the clear-cut outcome

but also by accounting for processes and establishing patterns of actions and how those (in)form EU performance.

When performed by collectives in unison, scholars identify corporate practices which are “structured and acted out by communities of practice, and by diffusion of background knowledge across agents in these communities, which similarly disposes them to act in coordination” (Adler & Pouliot, 2011, p.8). When it comes to organisations, practices are then structured by “practical rules, understandings, teleoaffective structures, and general understandings” (Schatzki 2012, p.16). It is not a state that undertakes corporate practices, but rather a community of representatives, such as the EU member states and the EU institutions for example, that enter patterned relations due to their similar background dispositions and an existent organised context. Yet, practices are not only structural, they can also be individual or agential, framing actors, “who, thanks to this framing, know who they are and how to act in an adequate and socially recognizable way” (Rasche & Chia, 2009 as cited in Adler & Pouliot, 2011, p.16). In sum, practices are defined by the link that they provide between ‘doings’ and ‘sayings’ as “an organised constellation of different people’s activities” (Schatzki 2012, p.13). Therefore, having as focal point in research practices, it refers not to just any practice, but to “socially meaningful patterns of action” (Bicchi & Bremberg, 2016, p. 394).

Pouliot (2008) explains that the logic of practicality is not identical with the logic of appropriateness, of consequences or of arguing, instead “practices are the result of inarticulate know-how that makes what is to be done self-evident or commonsensical” (Pouliot, 2008, p. 257). While diplomacy is traditionally understood via instrumental rationality, strategic action and cost-benefit calculations, the author emphasizes that the practical and inarticulate nature of diplomacy is pointed out through practitioners (Pouliot, 2008). It is through practices that diplomatic skill and background knowledge is identified, goes the argument; hence embracing a practice-oriented research helps “bringing the Background to the foreground” (Pouliot, 2008, p. 269). In her review of the practice turn in EU studies, Adler-Nissen (2016) points to those studies that highlight the importance of everyday practices for analysing the EU and European integration. Scholars working on ‘Europeanization’ and ‘socialization’ focused on routinized or everyday practices without necessarily

considering the practice approach methodologically (Wiener, 1998; Cini, 2007; Radaelli, 2008). It is the scholarship on organisational and public management that have been closest and successful in capturing practice as the unit of analysis and, therefore, the everyday of European governance (Adler-Nissen, 2016).

In this thesis, diplomacy is seen as set of practices. As Kissinger (1994) points out, diplomacy is not a science but rather an art; therefore the study of diplomacy cannot be reduced to theory but rather can be fully captured through uncovering practices as there is knowledge within the practice (Pouilot, 2008). Scholars that became recently interested in the practice turn in EU studies have also pursued the argument that there is a huge body of background knowledge in daily practices to be uncovered by researchers (Pouilot, 2008; Adler-Nissen, 2016; Bicchi & Bremberg, 2016). Bicchi and Bremberg (2016) in discussing practice approaches in the case of European diplomacy point out that “practices are best understood as “accounts of” European diplomatic practices, rather than “accounting for” them” (Bicchi & Bremberg, 2016, p. 395). Hence focusing on practices as unit of analysis facilitates moving beyond explaining how certain processes take place in EU diplomacy and moves attention to patterns of actions, especially relevant to research since there is no common agreement on what the practice of diplomacy generally means.

Diplomacy is understood here as a practice of daily interactions with a specific trait of “European diplomacy is fuzzy at its borders” (Bicchi & Bremberg, 2016, p. 369) and that seems to carry “the tension between the aim of forging “an ever closer union” and trying to keep their separateness visible” (Adler-Nissen, 2014 as referred to in Bicchi & Bremberg, 2016, p. 396). Therefore, the incorporation of the practice approach in the analytical framework of this thesis facilitates a better understanding of what is happening on the ground where European and national practices intersect.

3.3. Operationalization: how to measure diplomatic performance?

In organisational and management studies, the most commonly used indicators to measure performance of public or private agencies are the “three E’s”: *economy*, *efficiency* and *effectiveness* (Pidd 2012). While economy refers to the inputs or costs of production, efficiency refers to the ratio of output produced per a number of input units. Effectiveness, in turn, measures the degree to which outcomes of the process

meet the objectives of the agency. Besides the “three E’s”, scholars also highlight the importance of *relevance* and *financial viability* to discuss the needs of stakeholders and to assess resources (Lusthaus et al., 2002). In the study of public policies, scholars rely on such indicators as *equity* (an extent to which benefits are equally distributed across recipients) and *political feasibility* (probability of policy being adopted in the view of political constraints). The last criterion points to the importance of the broader context and environment, including ideology and worldview, in which the performance measurement is embedded (Rossell 1993; Gutner & Thompson 2010).

We adapt these commonly used indicators from the organisational studies literature and identify 3 criteria, namely effectiveness, relevance and capabilities, that we conceptualise in the sections below. Looking at performance implies examining and evaluating EU diplomatic practices against pre-set goals (*effectiveness*). It also allows us to learn about the relationship between the national and EU levels in the new post-Lisbon setting, where the EU delegations perform traditional and new diplomatic functions: representing the European Union and also cooperating with national embassies (*relevance*). Finally, it allows us to conduct a screening of capabilities and to understand how these pertain to the diplomatic realm (*capabilities*).

3.3.1. Effectiveness

Effectiveness is generally defined by the extent to which an organisation is *able to fulfil its goals* (Behn, 2003; Lusthaus et al, 2002; Gutner & Thompson, 2010). It is a cross-cutting concept which is widely used in a variety of disciplines. The literature on public policy-making ties the notion of effectiveness to the achievement of specific policy goals, i.e. policy implementation (Héritier, 2012). The international relations literature also widely discusses the notion of effectiveness (Hasenclever *et al.*, 1997; Hegemann et al., 2013). Analysing the performance of international environmental regimes, Young (1999) argues that effectiveness is a multi-faceted concept that may take on different forms: legal effectiveness (compliance with contractual obligations), economic effectiveness (the ratio between meeting the objectives and amount of resources spent), normative effectiveness (achievement of justice, participation and

other values), political effectiveness (changes in the behaviour and interests of actors). Similar rationalistic understanding of effectiveness is demonstrated by the scholars working in the fields of organizational studies and public management (Lusthaus, 2002; Meyer, 2002). Effectiveness is understood as an ability of an organization to successfully fulfil its objectives. Goal attainment is probably the most common interpretation of effectiveness, although its analysis can raise some challenges, especially when the goals are not clearly formulated, contradict each other, overlap or are scattered across different priority hierarchies (Gutner and Thompson, 2010).

As a diplomatic actor, the EU's purpose is *to secure its foreign policy objectives*; in third countries, this should be done via its diplomatic machinery. Some even argue that "without outputs that are effective in meeting their objectives and influencing international outcomes, the EU would lose internal confidence and outward influence as an international actor" (Ginsberg, 2001, p. 444-445). From this perspective, the EU's ability or failure to link means and ends in a specific external context feeds back the notion of effectiveness. Effectiveness is also related to what EU scholars initially categorize as presence (Allen & Smith, 1990; Bretherton & Vogler, 2006 and others), i.e. the EU's relationship with its external environment. It is also important to acknowledge that it is a challenging task to evaluate EU goal achievement. As Lusthaus et al. emphasize (2002), for political systems it is often a challenge to identify the goals, especially those that are not stated. In discussing the dimension of effectiveness as goal achievement, Jørgensen et al. (2011) also put an emphasis on the fact that "objectives can be so broad as to render them nearly meaningless for an assessment" (p. 604).

To examine whether the EU secures foreign policy objectives is a challenging but not an impossible task. It is the Lisbon Treaty and the ENP that serve as reference points in this thesis, from which we can derive some sort of benchmarks against which the performance of the EU can be assessed.

The central definition of effectiveness – goal attainment – is widely replicated in the study of the EU's external relations with its neighbours (Delcour, 2007; Delcour & Tulmets, 2007; Freyburg et al., 2009). Article 21(2) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) sets a broad list of the EU's goals in the international arena which include

support for democracy, rule of law, human rights, preservation of peace, conflict prevention and strengthening of international security, integration of world economy, eradication of poverty, multilateral cooperation and good global governance. In relation to Eastern European neighbours the majority of these are reflected in the ENP. Drawing on the EU's experience of the Eastern enlargement, domestic change and transformation in the third countries has become the main yardstick against which the EU's impact is measured (Grabbe 2006). For that purpose, the neighbourhood countries need to embark on the long-term process of convergence – Europeanization – that implies a selection, adoption and application of the EU's rules in their domestic political systems (Lavenex & Schimmelfennig 2009). If the ENP's rationale was to stabilize the EU's new borders through promoting democracy and market economy in the neighbouring countries then it is important to examine the *sustainability of democratic standards* in these countries, i.e. whether the EU in the long term ensures democratic practices to the extent to which the latter become the normal way of doing things. In order to do so, it is important to examine the changes that are happening in these countries through identifying the level of adaptation of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus to EU rules and norms.

Building a 'ring of friends' in Eastern European countries does not happen without the activity of the EU diplomatic actors, namely the Union Delegations. On the ground, these are tasked, according to the Lisbon Treaty, *to represent the Union* (art. 221 TFEU) and to *closely cooperate with national diplomatic missions*. The post-diplomacy Lisbon practices regarding the legal personality of the EU on the ground have been of interest to scholars of EU diplomacy (Duke, 2016; Vanhoonacker & Pomorska, 2016). One important development since the inauguration of the EEAS is that Union Delegations, on the ground, are representing the EU in all aspects of external action. To understand, then, how the EU becomes a diplomatic actor on the ground, an investigation of how both EU and national diplomats understand the 'representation of the Union' function given to the Delegations and what sort of role the Delegation plays after the inauguration of the EEAS is necessary. Scholars that study diplomacy from a practice perspective argue that "European integration over time has led to certain diplomatic practices "anchoring" others in a European setting" (Bicchi & Bremberg 2016, p. 398). In this sense, the focus is on the repeated interactional patterns among national and EU level diplomacy on the ground and

how these, in turn, make changes in European diplomatic practices possible; such as the Union Delegation representing the EU in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. Therefore, an investigation of how EU and national diplomats participate in diplomatic practices grasps the process of daily diplomatic activity and shows regularities or irregularities over time (Adler & Pouliot, 2011) in relation to the established goals.

3.3.2. Relevance

Assessing performance in relation to ongoing relevance implies the extent to which it meets the needs and requirements of its stakeholders and clients and is able to maintain their continuous support. This is to say that “organizations need to be relevant to both funders and clients, and must reconcile the differences” (Lusthaus et al 2002, p.119). Performance in this sense is assessed as the ability of an organisation to keep in line its established goals, programs and activities with the needs of its constituents and stakeholders. Hence, stakeholders and clients need to be supplied with goods and services they need and want. As organizational performance scholars emphasize when assessing relevance, it is important to discuss the level of satisfaction of stakeholders and clients (Lusthaus et al. 2002; Mitchell 2002). Stakeholders and clients are those most involved and with a vested interest in the outcome or contribution of the organization (Barclay & Osei-Bryson 2010). This is to say that stakeholders, through buying shares, and clients, through buying products or services, judge the relevance of these products or services. It is also important to note that stakeholders and clients may have similar or divergent views and expectations that can render constructive or destructive outcomes (Barclay & Osei-Bryson 2010; Bourne & Walker 2006).

To extrapolate this dimension to the EU, relevance is assessed both vis-à-vis EU member-states themselves and their citizens as well as relevance gauged in terms of MS satisfaction. Are Member-States satisfied with the practice of EU diplomacy in third countries? Do they feel that their expectations are met? At this level, relevance vis-à-vis member-states links back to authority, autonomy and cohesion (Jupille & Caporaso, 1998) or, in performance terms to representation, delegation and coordination (Jørgensen et al., 2011). Examined as a dimension of performance, one

needs to consider the implications of political cohesion, i.e. the ability to articulate consistently policy preferences (Thomas 2012; Metcalfe 1997). The importance of cohesion has been reaffirmed by the Lisbon Treaty and also emphasized by EU's High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, at her European Parliament hearing (European Parliament 2014) and is central in the political guidelines of the Juncker-led Commission (Commission 2014b). Considering cohesion refers to consistent alignment of common actions among stakeholders. It thus strongly relates to vertical coherence that deals with the relationship between the EU and national level and examines whether the two are in line and that MS reinforce EU-level efforts (Koenig, 2011). Relevance vis-à-vis MS links back to such functions as delegation and cooperation. For the EU as a diplomatic actor this aspect is especially relevant post-Lisbon since in Brussels, the EEAS linked national and EU diplomatic efforts and expectations were high in relation to cooperation with member-states on the ground. Whether EU stakeholders find it relevant can be assessed in relation to the extent to which all parties engage in acting collectively. This, in turn, reflects on the EU's overall coherence, recognised in the broader multilateral governance context and as Koenig (2011; 2016) emphasizes "there is general agreement that incoherence increases the risk of duplication, inefficient spending and ineffective policies" (Koenig, 2011, p. 16)²¹. In practice, for the EU as a diplomatic actor this implies engaging in multilateral diplomacy. As Watson (1982) emphasized, in multilateral diplomacy *cooperation* is key - the decision taken by one actor affects another one as well as the performance of one state has certain effects on the performance of another one. In this sense, the co-existence and interaction of a multitude of actors on the ground depends on the diplomatic machinery designed by the EU through the Lisbon Treaty that takes into consideration functions of diplomacy such as communication/dialogue, interdependence, recognition etc.

Scholars have emphasized that when important national interests are at stake member states often opt to avoid EU-level instruments and act unilaterally with member-states often choosing to act according to their respective economic (mainly

²¹ In her research Koenig (2011) distinguishes between 4 different forms of coherence: vertical, horizontal, institutional and multilateral. Given that horizontal and multilateral coherence deal with policy coherence and coherence vis-à-vis external actors which are outside the scope of this thesis, only vertical coherence and institutional coherence are referred to in this section to conceptualise relevance and capabilities.

energy and trade) or security interests (Rummel and Wiedermann 1998; Bosse & Schmidt-Felzmann 2011; Thomas 2012). Cooperation with member-states can be interpreted as a new and core diplomatic function of a diplomatic representation such as the Delegation. The issue of leadership, for which the EU has been criticized pre-Lisbon is addressed by this function. These are linked to the concepts of field and habitus that are key notions in Bourdieu's (1997) theory of practice²². Fields are made of unequal positions and refer to players that are dominant and others that are dominated and to the power relations that derive from their interaction and "are defined by the stakes which are at stake" (Jenkins 2002 as cited in Pouliot, 2008). By assuming the function of the Presidency, also in political affairs, via showing strong leadership and through engaging in cooperation, a more strategic approach between the EU and MS actions on the ground can be assumed. The Treaty itself entails that EU diplomatic actors, both the MS embassies and the Delegations in third countries "shall cooperate and shall contribute to formulating and implementing the *common approach*" (art. 32). Therefore, in this thesis, the issue of corporate practices is of relevance; these are not the actions of a single actor but rather of a community of actors, whose members enter patterned relations due to their similar background dispositions (Adler & Pouliot, 2011). This, in turn, relates to habitus, *i.e.* socialised norms or tendencies that guide behaviour and thinking, that is created and reproduced unconsciously "without any deliberate pursuit of coherence [...] without any conscious concentration" (Bourdieu 1977, p. 170). This helps understand the corporate practices over time, especially since habitus is shaped by past events. Academic literature has pointed out that it is this "mutually exclusive juxtaposition" of the EU and national level has been contested throughout the European integration theories (Bicchi & Bramberg, 2016, p. 396). And this is what the empirical analysis in this thesis will be looking at: the cooperation between the diplomatic actors on the ground and the corporate practices that exist.

²² It is the work of Adler and Pouliot that serves as the main source on the practice turn in IR that is used for shaping the analytical framework in this thesis. The work of Bourdieu, although a major inspiration for scholars working on the practice turn, does not figure prominently here due to that fact that the focus of his sociological study is power. However, in the conceptualisation of the criteria relevance and capabilities, Bourdieu's concepts of 'field', 'habitus' and 'capital' were used to finetune these criteria.

3.3.3. Capabilities

Lastly, organisational management and the practice turn in IR literature talks about resources²³. When it comes to (diplomatic) actorness, scholars discuss the EU's capabilities or capacity (Smith, 2015; Bretherton & Vogler, 2006, Barston, 2013). As defined by Bretherton and Vogler (2006), capabilities refers to EU's ability to mobilise or use resources in order to effectively react to its environment. Efficiency and financial viability both refer to resources. Financial viability explains that any organisation, for profit or non-for-profit depends on its ability to generate resources in order to meet its functional requirements in the short, medium and long-term Lusthaus et al. (2002). Efficiency evaluates the cost-effective production of results. Beyond a financial assessment, resources and instruments as dimensions envisaged by the EU *capabilities* refer to further aspects such as: shared commitments to values; domestic legitimation of decisions relating to external policies; ability to identify priorities and formulate policies in a consistent and coherent manner and the availability and capacity to use policy instruments (Sjöstedt, 1977 as cited in Bretherton & Vogler 2006). An assessment can be made based on the EU's ability to use appropriate instruments and techniques that will add value to diplomatic actions on the ground.

Establishing and maintaining overseas diplomatic offices is not solely linked to one's international identity but represents an essential resource as a means of communication, source of information, and key contact-point for promotion of interests abroad. Information and communication is a key resource for both strands of literature: for the practice turn accumulating diplomatic capital in the form of information links to influence (Adler-Niessen, 2008), from an organisational management perspective, information becomes an asset that makes it possible to perform or make others do things (Rieker, 2009). The obligation of both national embassies and the EU Delegations to "step up cooperation by *exchanging information and carrying out joint statements*" (art. 35) as well as to cooperate in *ensuring that EU positions and actions are complied with and implemented* (art. 35) rely heavily on communication, a quintessential function for diplomacy (Neumann, 2008). In both bilateral and multilateral diplomatic relations communication is

²³ Performance literature considers efficiency and financial viability of an organization as important dimensions to analyse performance. See Lusthaus et al., 2002

omnipresent; the diplomatic community relies on information-gathering, information-negotiating and identifying other actors' intentions especially in an era of complex international relations (Nicoloson, 1963; Berrige, 1995; Leguey-Feilleux, 2009). Moreover, diplomatic capabilities imply sharing of information such as exchange of political information (Rijks & Whitman, 2007).

Through examining the EU's diplomatic capabilities, the assessment of performance explores whether the EU's instruments are fit for purpose in supporting the conduct of the EU's foreign policy and whether there is a distinction between European and national diplomatic resources (Rijks & Whitman, 2007). It also examines the interaction between the EU and MS actors in terms of creating synergies between the actions of the different EU actors present in Eastern Europe; which, in turn, reflects on institutional coherence (as Koenig, 2011 coins it). Without creating, sustaining and mobilizing capabilities, little aggregation of individual or collective purpose can be accomplished (March and Olsen 1998). Organisational management literature puts emphasis on several dimensions of capabilities, one of which refers to competencies and knowledge on the part of individuals, professions and institutions. Individuals have competencies from their education and training while institutions encrypt knowledge in rules and traditions. Competence and knowledge is therefore a result of a combination of recruitment policy, leadership, skills, training programs and the extent to which it draws upon policy analysis provided by institutes. The practice turn in IR literature also discusses diplomatic capital as "the resources that count as a valid currency for exchange in a field" (Adler-Niessen, 2008, p. 670). These resources refer to both the political and social capital (authority, competences, reputation, power, institutions) that are constantly renewed (ibidem). As Bourdieu (1997) also emphasized - capital can be social, cultural or symbolic, implying that capital extends beyond material assets. Therefore, an analysis of capabilities will examine the dedicated diplomatic capital in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus, including the examination of a communication infrastructure, of institutional dynamics, competences and knowledge, hence both the political and social capital that it implies.

3.4. Conclusion

This chapter has established the analytical framework of this thesis. It has discussed the notion of performance that is a key term transgressing different intra and inter-disciplinary boundaries and focused on practice as the unit of analysis. Therefore addressing the central research question posed in this thesis, namely – to what extent has the EU developed as a successful diplomatic actor after the inauguration of the EEAS? – builds on two strands of literature, that of organisational studies and that of the practice turn in IR/EU studies. Instead of accounting for European diplomacy, this analytical framework allows us to better understand accounts of EU diplomatic practices via three criteria - effectiveness, relevance and capabilities. The latter are also relevant to the three working assumptions that have been proposed at the end of Chapter two (see section 2.3.2.) that generally show how we expect the EU to manifest itself as a successful diplomatic actor. First of all, looking at performance implies examining and evaluating EU diplomatic practices against pre-set goals in line with the way we have operationalised *effectiveness*. Hence, the expectation of the first assumption (*post-Lisbon EU diplomacy with an institutional distinctiveness is able to articulate its own stated objectives*) is that on the ground the Union Delegation fully embrace its diplomatic function of representation in all aspects of external relations as the Lisbon Treaty prescribes. And, that in Eastern Europe, there is an ability of European and national institutions (*i.e.* EU Delegation and MS embassies) to implement the ENP policy goals of promoting democratic governance in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. Second of all, performance is assessed in relation to ongoing relevance, operationalised in terms of cohesion and cooperation among member-states. Consequently, the expectation of the second assumption (*the changes in post-Lisbon diplomacy imply convergence of member states actions and build up coherence*) is that for the EU as a diplomatic actor, acting collectively should become especially relevant as there is a direct prerogative of cooperation among EU Delegations and MS embassies on the ground. And thirdly, analysing performance implies a screening of capabilities and to understand how these pertain to the diplomatic realm. Hence, the third assumption (*the level of supranational activism through post-Lisbon diplomacy strengthens EU capabilities*) assumes that a successful EU diplomatic actor is manifesting strong capabilities on

the ground with a strong diplomatic esprit de corps, a strong communication network, with strong competences and knowledge.

Before discussing these assumptions in Chapter 7, the thesis first turns to presenting throughout Chapters 4, 5 and 6 the empirical evidence collected during the field-work conducted in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. Each empirical chapter follows the same structure. Firstly, a brief background of the relationship between the EU and these countries is outlined. Subsequently, evidence is presented vis-à-vis the three criteria: effectiveness, relevance and capabilities. The data regarding the first criterion, effectiveness, has been collected in relation to the ENP goals as well as to the Lisbon Treaty goals (as operationalised in section 3.3.1.) and will be presented in this order. Finally, each chapter will present an interim conclusion on the empirical evidence presented without going into a detailed discussion of findings. Later, in Chapter 7, all findings are brought together and the discussion shows the application of the three criteria. This is the chapter that will firstly compare and contrast the findings on the 3 individual case-studies; and secondly will revisit the set of working assumptions presented in Chapter 2.

Chapter 4. EU diplomatic performance in Moldova

The relationship between Moldova and the EU took shape and form relatively late. Moldova gained its independence in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union and is the poorest country in Europe (Worldatlas, 2015) situated on the EU's immediate border. The institutionalization of the EU-Moldova relationship started in 1994 with the negotiation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) which entered into force only in 1998. It was not until 2004, with the ENP (Commission, 2004) that the EU-Moldova relationship experienced a fundamental change: the EU developed Country Strategy Papers, including for Moldova, included it in the ENP, and in 2005 signed the Moldova-EU Action Plan (AP). The implementation of the Plan would result in an approximation of Moldovan legislation, norms and standards to those of the EU. Since 2009, Moldova has been included in the EU's more ambitious partnership, the Eastern Partnership (EaP), described as entailing '*a growing responsibility to the partners, to help them address the political and economic challenges that they face and to support their aspirations for closer ties.*' (Commission, 2008, p.2). Besides responding to the need for differentiation among the ENP countries, the EaP responded to the EU's main interests of better governance, stability and economic development on its Eastern borders. It is within the EaP framework that negotiations on the EU–Moldova Association Agreement started (AA, signed in 2014) that aim at enhancing the institutional links with the EU and form the current umbrella for Moldova-EU relationship took place.

On the ground, the Commission representation, established in October 2005, was mandated to implement EU external aid programmes such as those focused on support of democratic governance, poverty reduction and economic growth (Delegation, 2009). In 2006 the representation of the Commission employed project managers, provided training in Brussels for them and afterwards launched a fully operational representation while the political staff was placed in the Commission representation in Kiev (interv. 1). Post-Lisbon, the Commission representation transformed to a fully-fledged diplomatic representation as a Union Delegation, holding the status of a diplomatic mission and officially representing the European Union in the Republic of Moldova.

In order to discuss the diplomatic performance of the European Union in Moldova according to the three established criteria: effectiveness, relevance and capability, this chapter presents the empirical evidence collected in relation to these criteria. Adopting a historical approach, the chapter starts with a brief overview of Moldova-EU relations. As set out in chapter 3, effectiveness is a criterion that is assessed on two dimensions, one that explores the degree of democratic governance in Moldova and the other that investigates the diplomatic practices of representing the Union in Moldova. The relevance section evaluates how EU and member-state embassies in Moldova have cooperated and contributed to formulating a common approach, and the capabilities section focuses on diplomatic capital, presenting evidence on the EU's diplomatic resources and instruments on the ground. Hence, this chapter presents, in a structured manner, the empirical evidence collected during the field-work conducted in Moldova as well as based on the study of secondary sources (such as policy briefs, legislation, national and international reports as well as academic findings from scholarly literature on Moldova-EU). A discussion of these findings will be presented in Chapter 7 that will clearly show the application of the three criteria that have been discussed in Chapter 3.

4.1. Background of EU-Moldova relations

Adopting a historical approach, this section provides a brief overview of the development of Moldova-EU relations, the institutionalisation of this relationship under the PCA, the ENP and EaP respectively and the development of the diplomatic representation of the EU and of national representations.

4.1.1. From PCA to ENP

The PCA Agreement that entered into force in 1998 aimed at supporting Moldova's efforts to strengthen democracy, develop its economy through encouraging trade and investment as well as to provide a suitable framework for political dialogue. The PCA marked a turn in the cooperation between Moldova and the EU: it was the first institutionalisation of their political relations, it provided a framework for political dialogue, trade liberalization and even harmonization of legislation. The PCA defined a new model for the relations; a model that could be described as good neighbourly

relations as part of which the Union assists its weaker partner by supporting democratic and market reforms, among other measures (PCA Moldova, 1994). Even though the PCA provided a framework to support Moldovan efforts to consolidate its democracy and develop its economy so as to complete the transition to a market economy, except for TACIS, it did not have a country-specific focus or instrument (TACIS was the EU's technical assistance instrument for all countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States).

Authorities in the Moldovan capital, Chisinau, developed an interest in European integration immediately after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, yet, in the early 90s, no comprehensive policy vis-à-vis the EU was developed. After electing a communist government in the early 2000, for the first three years, Moldova pledged its commitment to the East. A political turn of the Communist government towards the EU happened in 2003, the year when Moldova was included in the ENP. The ENP did not lead to new contractual relations between the EU and Moldova; however, the ENP Action Plan signed in 2005 set out a roadmap for enhanced relations based on conditionality. The priorities of the Action Plan (AP) were much wider in scope. They included the perspective of moving beyond cooperation to a significant degree of integration (a stake in the EU's Internal Market) and the possibility for Moldova to participate progressively in key aspects of EU policies and programmes and participation in Community programmes; an upgrade in the scope and intensity of political cooperation and the opportunity for convergence of economic legislation; the continued reduction of trade barriers; and increased financial support through technical assistance (ENP Action Plan, 2004, p. 2–3). The EU formally required Moldova to adopt the EU *acquis*. Subsequently, Moldova initiated a pro-EU reform agenda in line with the ENP Action Plan in the areas of political dialogue, justice and home affairs, economic and social politics, commerce and settlement of the Transnistrian conflict²⁴.

²⁴ Transnistria is a breakaway region from Moldova and considers itself an (unrecognized) independent state: it broke away from the former Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic of the Soviet Union in 1990 with a short war between the Moldovan and Transnistrian side taking place between March and July 1992. Today it retains its independence due largely to the military support provided by the Russian 14th Army. A cease-fire led to the creation of a three-party Joint Control Commission, consisting of Russia, Moldova, and Transnistria, which supervises a demilitarized security zone on both sides of the Nistru River. It has been a "frozen conflict" ever since.

4.1.2. From ENP to EaP and the Association Agreement

Since 2009, Moldova has been included in the EU's more ambitious partnership, the Eastern Partnership (EaP), that included, in its bilateral track, the prospect of an Association Agreement (AA), initialled at the EaP summit in Vilnius in November 2013. Replacing the former PCA, the EU–Moldova AA aimed at enhancing the institutional framework with the EU and deepening political association and economic integration, implying reciprocal obligations and rights. Overall, the scope of the AA is considered comprehensive, balanced and broad in scope. To a certain degree it is comparable to the 35 chapters that an EU candidate country must negotiate before accession: although structured differently, the AA covers almost all issues incorporated in the 35 chapters²⁵. It is a highly ambitious document that expects a wide range of reforms to be implemented, a high degree of participation in EU programmes and in regional development, cross-border and civil society cooperation. It is a reform agenda aimed at regulatory approximation to the EU, political association and economic integration. The EU and Moldova have also concluded negotiations on a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA). The main objective of the DCFTA is to bring Moldovan legislation closer to EU legislation in trade and trade-related areas²⁶. The DCFTA – the EU's new generation of FTAs – is 'deep' in the sense that it requires partners to adopt up to 80% of the EU's trade and trade-related *acquis*.

Some of the areas have been higher up on the political agenda of the Moldovan government during negotiations, such as cooperation in the sphere of freedom, security and justice (hereafter FSJ) and trade and trade-related matters. The framework of the FSJ chapter within the AA is based on the Justice and Home Affairs section within the Action Plan, but is perceived as more comprehensive and more ambitious by local stakeholders (interv. MD 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 12 and 13). It represents a reform agenda in the fields of justice, internal affairs and human

²⁵ The EU-Moldova Association Agreement counts over 1000 pages and consists of the followings: A Preamble as an introductory statement of the Agreement, setting out the Agreement's purpose and underlying philosophy; seven Titles: General Principles; Political Cooperation and Foreign and Security Policy; Justice Freedom and Security; Trade and Trade-related Matters (DCFTA); Economic and Sector Cooperation; Financial Cooperation with Anti-Fraud Provisions, as well as Institutional, General and Final Provisions; 35 Annexes setting out EU legislation to be incorporated by a specific date and four Protocols.

²⁶ Title IV: Trade and trade-related matters has the following objective: '*The Parties shall progressively establish a free trade area over a transitional period of maximum 10 years starting from the entry into force of this Agreement*' and includes the following articles: 1. National treatment and market access for goods; 2. Trade remedies; Technical Barriers to trade; 3. Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary measures; 4. Customs and trade facilitation, 5. Establishment, Trade in Services; 6. Current Payments and movement of capital; 7. Public Procurement; 8. Intellectual Property; 9. Competition; 10. Trade related energy; 11. Transparency; 12. Trade and sustainable development.

rights²⁷. Furthermore, the issue of mobility and visa liberalization, as components of the FSJ, have been widely addressed by Moldova and the EU; and as a result, formulations on the FSJ have been included in such a way as to represent the progress made in the area of the visa dialogue (Caras 2011). The main focus here is on integrated border management, visa liberalization and security standards, as well as reform in the judicial and police fields – which are closely related to human rights issues and combating corruption (Commission 2008). There has been less negotiation concerning the Transnistrian issue, which remains a central point within the political dialogue and reform, cooperation in the field of foreign and security policy chapter of the AA. All these areas involve a high degree of legislation harmonization or in some cases even initiation of new legislation, i.e. adopting EU legislation in areas like environment, trade, education or transportation. In turn, this indicates the strong reform commitment undertaken by the Moldovan government when it initialled the AA.

4.1.3. EU and MS diplomatic representations in Chisinau

As shown in Chapter 2 (Table 5, section 2.2.2.) the European diplomatic system in Moldova by 2015 consisted of 15 representations – 14 national embassies and 1 Union delegation as presented in Table 7 below. Member-states such as Germany, Romania and France were larger, having a bigger number of diplomatic personnel accredited with the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs while the Baltic states, United Kingdom and the Czech Republic had a smaller number of diplomatic personnel. The EU Delegation had the largest number of personnel accredited in Moldova, yet, not all of them were diplomats: as Table 6 showed, only 11 came from EEAS (Chapter 2, section 2.2.2.). The categorization of a diplomatic representation as small, medium or large is based on the evidence collected during fieldwork conducted in Moldova and on the interviewees' specification regarding their own diplomatic missions or vis-à-vis the other missions and reflected on their staff capacity solely (and it seemed that an embassy with 10 diplomats and more was considered large).

²⁷ The reform agenda includes issues such as: cooperation on migration, asylum and border management; cooperation on the fight against illicit drugs; money laundering and terrorism financing; combating terrorism; movement of persons; preventing and combating organized crime and corruption and other illegal activities.

Table 7. National and EU diplomatic missions in Moldova: 2015			
Embassy/Delegation		No. of diplomatic staff²⁸	Size
EU member-state embassies	Bulgaria	9	medium
	Czech Republic	6	small
	Estonia*	1	small
	France	11	large
	Germany	18	large
	Hungary	7	medium
	Italy	5	small
	Latvia	2	small
	Lithuania	4	small
	Poland	10	large
	Romania	15	large
	Slovakia	2	small
	Sweden	7	medium
	United Kingdom	5	small
EU	EU	20**	large
Total	15		
<i>Notes:</i>			
*Estonia had only an office of the embassy in Moldova and not a fully-fledged embassy			
**this number does not include the press and information officers which were not part of the EUD before 2015			
<i>Source:</i> Data compiled by the author in 2014 and updated in 2015 based on the website of the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs			

Whereas the Commission representation in Moldova opened only in 2005 and upgraded in November 2009 to a fully-fledged Union Delegation with the appointment of Dirk Schuebel, a German diplomat, as the first Head of the EU Delegation to Moldova; some level of intersection between the EU and Moldovan counterparts was made possible via the TACIS office opened in 1999. TACIS stands for the technical assistance programme implemented by the European Commission to help members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (such as Moldova) in their transition to democratic market-oriented economies. The intersection between the Moldovan and the EU counterpart was rather technical in nature: the Commission representation in Kiev was responsible for EU relations with Moldova till 2005 and, to ensure TACIS implementation, a branch of the Kiev representation was opened in Chisinau in late 1999 (Europeaid, 2000). This meant oversight over

²⁸ In this table the number of diplomatic staff reflects solely to the national diplomats accredited in the host-country and does not reflect the total number of employees of the embassy or delegation.

activities in 7 sectors and 4 facility instruments that summed up to €186.45 mil from 1991 till 2006 allocated via TACIS (ibidem). With the ENP, the European Union has designed instruments that foster the relationship with Moldova such as the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI) and from 2014 the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI). The EU's support to Moldova through the ENP for 2011–2013 was €273.7 million and for 2014-2015 was €221 million as Table 8 indicates.

Table 8: EU financial aid to Moldova 1991-2014 (indicative amounts)	
Programme	Total amount (million euro)
TACIS (1991–2006)	186.45
ENPI (2007–2010)	209.7
ENPI (2011–2013)	273.1
ENI (2014-2015 only)	221

Source: Baltag & Bosse (2016, p. 67) and authors' compilation of data from NIP Moldova (2011–2013) and the European Commission Annual Action Programme for Moldova for 2015 (Commission, n.d.; Commission, 2015b)

Before 2005, an opening of a fully-fledged representation in Moldova was impossible due to budgetary constraints as the TACIS country strategy paper for Moldova explains (Europeaid, 2000). With no Commission representation in Moldova till 2005, most diplomatic contact points were with Brussels or Strasbourg: the first EC-Moldova Cooperation Council was held in Brussels in July 1998 and the first EC-Moldova Parliamentary Cooperation Committee was held in Strasbourg in October (Commission, 1999). This changed with the opening of the Commission representation which was given the status of a diplomatic mission and officially represented the European Commission in Moldova. The latter was mandated to promote the political and economic relations between Moldova and the European Union and to participate in the implementation of the European Union's external assistance programmes (mainly TACIS, ENPI), which focused on supporting democratic development and good governance, supporting regulatory reform and administrative capacity building, and supporting poverty reduction and economic growth (Delegation, 2009). The mandate of the Union Delegation remained quite similar and will be discussed in section 4.3.

Observations of the diplomatic activities in Moldova (but also similar in Ukraine and Belarus) attest that besides their traditional diplomatic role of representing, being a node of communication and contact, dealing with bi- and multilateral relations in traditional ways, diplomatic representations have been very active in engaging in trade diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, public diplomacy and have acquired new activities such as donors. National diplomats have dealt with political relations and political development related activities such as political reporting, developing of the political agenda and political networking; have been involved in negotiations with local ministries on bilateral and EU issues; have dealt with economic related affairs from reporting on economic issues to promoting of national economic interests, such as trying to improve or increase national investments to the host country but also helping national investors that face difficulties in the host countries. Also, part of their activity has been to deal with cultural promotion, gathering and processing information, attending different local events and engaging with the local public beyond the capital cities. There have also been internal, administrative issues that a diplomat has to deal with. And finally, another aspect of their activities has been involvement in providing development aid assistance, monitoring and evaluating the progress on the reform agenda of the host countries, as well as building bridges and creating partnerships²⁹.

4.2. Effectiveness: sustainability of ENP goals

This section presents information related to the first criterion – effectiveness. Effectiveness, as operationalised in the analytical framework (Chapter 3), is about goal attainment. In the EU's neighbourhood goal attainment is linked to both the ENP and the Lisbon Treaty. The ENP is an umbrella framework for the EU's relations with its neighbours in the East that took form, as the previous section showed, in the form of the Association Agreement. Moldova, part of the ENP, has embarked on a process of convergence to EU rules and norms and their adoption and application in its national system. Hence, the first part of this section will examine the sustainability of democratic standards in Moldova through identifying the level of Moldova's adaptation to EU rules and norms between 2010 and 2015. It will also explore the

²⁹ Observations made based on the field-work conducted in all three countries as well as from studying the embassies webpages and facebook pages.

activity of the national embassies and the Union Delegations in this sense. The second section then turns to the post-Lisbon changes related to effectiveness. As the analytical framework emphasized, on the ground, the Commission representation has been upgraded to a fully-fledged Union Delegation that represents the Union in Moldova. Here, the focus is on presenting data relevant to this goal.

4.2.1. Level of adaptation/alignment to EU rules and norms

The AA represented a new step in the development of the Moldova-EU relationship and it also can be interpreted as a reform agenda aimed at regulatory approximation to the EU, political association and economic integration. Taking into consideration the emphasis on the political association and economic integration, the empirical analysis will focus on two areas covered by the AA: justice, freedom and security issues and trade and trade-related matters. Given this context, the analysis of the sustainability of ENP goals in Moldova, that of democratic governance in Moldova is examined in relation to the level of adaption to EU rules and norms, i.e. approximation to the EU acquis.

Table 9. Approximation rate of EaP countries to the EU: Moldova						
<i>*approximation indices (1=best performer; 0=worst performer)</i>						
Sector cooperation	Moldova	Georgia	Ukraine	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Belarus
Deep and sustainable democracy	0.76	0.73	0.61	0.61	0.29	0.27
Independent judiciary	0.83	0.88	0.47	0.73	0.27	0.24
Freedom, Security and Justice	0.99	0.90	0.86	0.64	0.60	0.42
Source: Author's compilation based on EaP Index 2014						

Moldova has been considered a frontrunner in the ENP and EaP due to its high level of compliance with EU rules and norms. The EaP Index also shows Moldova as the best performer and top reformer in terms of approximation between 2010 and 2015, coming in first among the six EaP members (see Table 9). This refers to how closely the institutions and policies of a country resemble those of the EU member-states, how they converge towards EU standards and whether these are in line with EU

requirements. As Table 9 shows, Moldova scored highest in the area of democracy and FJS, and relatively high as regards deep and sustainable democracy.

Table 10. EU acts transposed into Moldovan legislation, 2007–2013	
Field	No of adopted acts (normative and legislative)
Agriculture and Rural development (incl. veterinary and zoo-technology)	83
Industrial policy and internal market	26
Environment, consumers and health protection	22
Freedom, Security and Justice	12
Work employment, equal chances and social policy	9
The right to establish and freedom of offering services	8
Enterprise law	7
Transportation policy	4
Energy policy	4
General, financial and institutional matters	3
Competition policy	3
Customs Union and free movement of goods	2
Fishing policy	2
Economic and monetary policy and free circulation of capital	2
Foreign Relations	1
Other (taxation; science, information, education and culture etc.)	0
Total	188
<i>Source:</i> Authors' compilation based on the database of EU transposed acts available on the website of the Moldovan Ministry of Justice: http://justice.gov.md/tabview.php?l=ro&idc=225	

According to experts' evaluation, by 2015, Moldova had made very good progress in laying down a comprehensive legislative framework, one more compatible with the regulatory environment and putting it in the lead (EaP Index, 2014). The relevant legislative framework was largely in place, with some of its elements pending approval by the Parliament (interv. MD 6, 13). According to EU evaluation, despite the need for certain improvements, the instruments adopted and the drafts were largely in line with European and international standards (Commission, 2012). As data from the Centre of the Harmonization of Legislation [with the EU acquis] show, up to 2013 Moldova had adopted 188 normative and legislative acts (see below

Table 10). The Moldovan monitoring reports from 2014 show that “out of 288 actions planned to be completed by June 30th, 2014, 173 were completed and 115 continue to be unrealized, which constitutes, respectively, a percentage ratio of 60% to 40%” (ADEPT & Expert-Grup 2014, p. 4) which is regarded as a positive trend.

On the sectoral level, Moldova had conducted a wide range of reforms in accordance with EU standards. As regards good governance and the rule of law, the Moldovan government had progressed reforms in the justice sector and adjacent areas such as migration and border management according to the strategy for the justice sector reform to be implemented in Moldova till 2015 (interv. MD 6). The highlight within these reforms was the arrest, on corruption charges, of five judges in early 2014– the first time in the history of the country (Leancă, 2014). In the sector of migration and border management, several additional reforms were carried out. Take, for example, document security (including biometrics): since 2011 Moldova issues only biometric passports, and a new law on protecting personal data was passed in accordance with EU standards. In the area of irregular immigration (including re-admission), Moldova developed an Action Plan and implemented the Integrated Border Management Strategy. A precondition for effective fight against illegal migration or customs fraud, as expected by the EU, is the introduction of integrated border management (Canciani, 2009). Moldova modernized its border management procedures in compliance with the EU concept of integrated border management, based on the adoption of regular strategies and plans (interv MD 18). Establishing integrated border management impacted on such key policy areas as trade, customs, visa and mobility of persons. Moreover, there has been a drastic reform of the police. The border police forces were demilitarized and incorporated into the Ministry of Internal Affairs, salaries were increased, and disciplinary procedures were initiated against police officers accused of implication in corruption cases. Most changes were made in line with FRONTEX (European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union) regulations as agreed with the EU (Commission, 2015c).

Progress was made also in relation to democracy promotion and respect for human rights. As regards human rights and fundamental freedoms, Moldova ratified and made progress in implementing several international and European instruments, as required by the EU, such as the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant

Workers, the UN Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees and the UN Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons. It also created a Reception Centre for Asylum Seekers and a Temporary Placement Centre for Foreigners. Among the most sensitive legislation that was passed were the Law on Equal Opportunities and the reform of the Anti-Corruption Centre (interv. MD 18). As Moldovan monitoring reports show, at the end of 2013 the government adopted a new draft law on the people's advocate as well as progressed in organizing the activity of community mediators for Roma-populated communities and continued efforts to promote the social inclusion of persons with disabilities (ADEPT& Expert-Grup, 2013). Another successful change was the incorporation in the National Human Rights Plan 2011–2014 of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review. As a general evaluation for the period 2005-2014, progress reports emphasized that the Moldovan legislation had improved so that it prohibited discrimination based on race, sex, disability, ethnicity or social status (Botan et al., 2015).

On the other hand, Moldova's track record also had certain deficiencies. Moldova lagged behind in the implementation of reforms (interv MD 3, 8, 9, 10) and, to cite the former Prime Minister Iurie Leancă (2014), 'we need to do our homework'. Implementation of EU norms in some cases remained a challenge due to the lack of the necessary financial and human resources and a vision for a mainstreaming approach or political will (interv. MD 2, 12, 13, 17, 18). It is important to differentiate policy areas: as some Moldovan civil servants emphasize, the pace of reform was slower in certain areas than others because some entailed political costs, whereas others were more technical in nature (interv. MD 2, 12). Data from the Centre of Harmonization at the Ministry of Justice show that there was no real effort to create a roadmap for governmental decision-making, with a clear timeframe; moreover, there was insufficient coordination of all relevant ministries to fulfil EU obligations (interv. MD 2, 12, 13).

Table 11 below assesses Moldova's progress 2005–2012 in the areas of democracy, human rights and rule of law with the ratings given by national experts themselves. According to the authors, the Moldovan authorities were undertaking reforms for the sake of reporting back to the EU; Moldova still lagged behind in areas like ensuring democracy and the rule of law: *'adoption of the legislation framework is not always*

followed by the development of effective mechanisms for human rights protection, while strengthening the existing mechanisms is not perceived as a priority. This approach of "half measures" does not allow an effective protection of human rights' (Botan et al. 2013, p. 24).

Table 11. Moldova's progress 2005–2012		
Areas as established within the ENP AP <i>*approximation indices (0=lowest score; 5=highest score)</i>	Rating established	
	Nr value³⁰	assessment
Democracy and rule of law (democratic institutions, judicial system, administrative capacity and other sub-areas)	2.3	modest
Human rights and fundamental freedoms (minority rights, children's rights, freedom of expression, prevention of, and the fight against, the trafficking in human beings, ill-treatment and torture and other sub-areas)	2.6	moderate
Settlement of the Transnistrian conflict (border security, civil society and democracy and other related areas)	1.5	minor
<i>Source: Authors' compilation based on national evaluation of Moldova's progress (Botan et al. 2013)</i>		

The report highlights that there are deficiencies in carrying out the judicial reform which leaves room for interference by interest groups, political involvement and corruption. Additionally, many actions foreseen in this area have not been implemented. The 2015 report further highlighted that despite having a solid legal framework for promoting human rights, Moldova demonstrated significant lacunae during the implementation process, a problem highly interconnected with a poor justice sector in the country (Botan et al. 2015).

4.2.2. The role of diplomatic actors in Chisinau

Generally speaking, between 2010 and 2015 the diplomatic community in Moldova channelled its effort to try to create a proper climate and atmosphere that might bring peace and development in the host country, especially for the young generations. Through many of their activities, diplomats were aligned in their efforts to be of help to Moldova in implementing its European vocation and achieving its European aspiration, which in practice meant helping Moldova to go further on the European

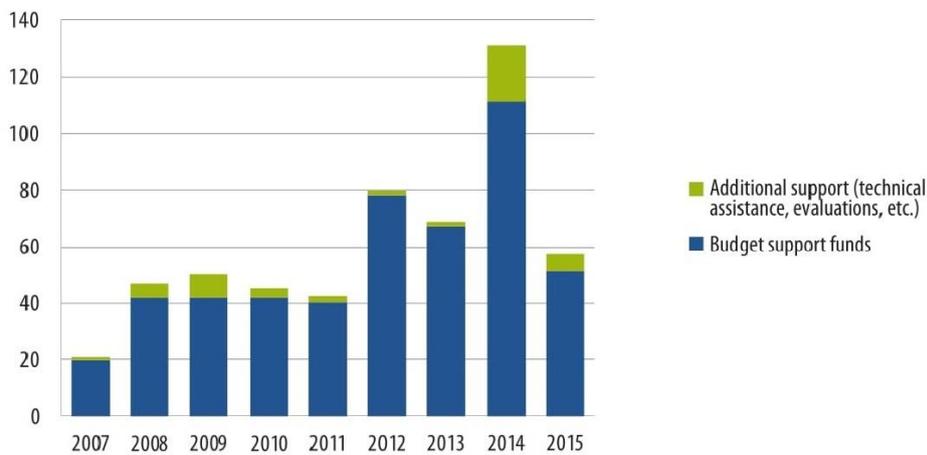
³⁰ Progress has been estimated by civil society representatives responsible for monitoring the Moldovan reform process according to EU standards on a level from 0 to 5, 0 being the lowest and 5 being the highest, as well as relevant assessment – regression, no progress, modest, moderate, high.

path and achieve some results in transforming its economy, society, rule of law, freedom and other proper conditions to develop the country (interv. 25-32; 38-41). National as well as European diplomats tried to deal with local authorities in Moldova and their mission was to develop diplomatic relations, to promote common ideas, where such a stance is possible: “sometimes we have to work in a state where there is quite significant differences of understanding of the work we are doing and we look for possibilities to develop the relationship even if the position are different” (ibidem).

Data collected from the field-work conducted in Moldova shows that operationally, there was no big difference between the practices of national or EU diplomacy in reaching the earlier mentioned efforts in Moldova. The difference, as one EU diplomat explained, was in working at the EU level and representing the interest of the EU and all member-states: “the scope of the interest is broader this needs to be taken into account and coordinated internally within the EU (the interest) – this is an important aspect and this is mostly done in Brussels within the COEST working group where policy towards Eastern Europe is coordinated” (interv. 26). For national diplomats, “either national or EU, the message is similar” (interv. 27), the difference was that for a member-state’s diplomatic mission it was about representing your own country and, hence, subordination was to the national headquarters, from where they received their instructions.

In Moldova, the EUD was the largest single donor for development assistance in Moldova (see data from Table 8), hence it had high leverage in the context of cooperation with the government and according to the Delegation’s staff, this “makes the EU a natural leader on the ground” (interv. 39). The Delegation on the ground was constantly in touch with local stakeholders and was involved in organizing regular meetings with Moldova’s leadership, with representatives of the government and different ministries and played an important role in coming to an agreement regarding the budgetary support offered by the EU to Moldova (interv. 1; see data in Figure 3 below). The Delegation also played a great role in reporting on Moldova’s progress within the ENP and EaP in relation to carrying out of specific reforms results of which can be seen within the ENP Progress Reports for the relevant years. A screening of Moldova’s progress was reported in both positive and negative terms.

Figure 3. EU budgetary support offered to Moldova 2007-2015



Source: European Court of Auditors (2016). EU assistance for strengthening the public administration in Moldova Special Report no.13, p. 8, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

As result of the positive progress, the EU–Moldova political dialogue continued to deepen throughout 2011 - 2015 and contacts between high-level officials intensified. For example, the first visit to the Republic of Moldova of HE Baroness Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice-president of the European Commission was organised in 2011; in April 2012 President Timofti paid a visit to Brussels, reciprocated by European Commission President Barroso in November. In February 2012, Commissioner De Gucht opened negotiations in Chisinau on establishing a DCFTA, and Commissioner Malmström met three times with the Moldovan Prime Minister in 2012 (Commission 2006a, p. 2). On the other hand, the Delegation became more outspoken when Moldova did not deliver. For example, Pirkka Tapiola, the Head of the EU Delegation in Chisinau between 2013-2017, spoke more about the negative tendencies from justice rather than about Moldova’s successes in the area of human rights defence at the reception organized by the EU Delegation to mark the ending of a conference in the area of human rights in Moldova, which had involved experts from the EU, the OSCE, the UN, but also the Council of Europe (Jurnal, 2016).

When talking about the activity of their missions, diplomats emphasized that their main focus was “to have stable neighbours, less migration pressure, less human trafficking, stable political environment, stronger institutions and a better security

environment” in a country like Moldova (interv. 39). The traditional way of developing diplomatic bilateral relations, as some diplomats argued, is through trade and cultural cooperation, but also via providing development aid assistance, especially in Moldova, a country in transition with a commitment to reforms to be conducted by the political class (interv. 25-32; 38-41). For example, countries like Poland, “as part of the European attitude [...] aim at sharing prosperity, promoting concrete projects, developing democracy, creating good conditions of development for society, education, health. We help to renovate some schools, some hospitals, these are not big projects, but important” (interv. 28). Germany developed a large portfolio on legal cooperation, on modernization of public services, on water management and assistance to the different ministries through bringing in advisors on European integration.

But today, as noted in chapter 2, diplomatic interaction is highly diverse and diplomacy has expanded beyond representation, communication or negotiation in times of war and peace (section 2.2.1.). Besides their traditional diplomatic role, therefore, national embassies and the EU delegations have become very active in their roles as donors and have developed a strong relationship with civil society organisations, not just the governments. In Moldova this has implied organising events with and for civil society organisations, organising grant competitions as well as consulting them in their areas of expertise or delegating to them the organisation of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum³¹. One key instrument that the EU has designed to upgrade civil society to key stakeholders in implementing reforms is the Civil Society Forum within the EaP. Moldova is active within the Civil Society (CS) Forum, the EU platform for EaP civil society cooperation, where common approaches on different democracy and good governance initiatives, including human rights, have been discussed. The fact that in 2013 the Forum was hosted in Moldova and not in Lithuania (the EU MS country hosting the Presidency) bore witness to Moldova’s progress on the reform agenda as well as its active participation in this framework. The Moldovan national CS platform had been very active in proposing items on the policy agenda of the EaP, more active and advanced than the other national platforms: it was Moldova that produced policy

³¹ The Eastern Partnership Forum is a regional civil society platform facilitating democratic reforms. For the first time such a Forum was organized outside of the EU country holding the Presidency in 2013, when it was decided to be organized in Chisinau, Moldova

proposals on education, on integration of volunteers and on the ERASMUS+ programme (interv. MD 17, 19 and 20).

Through their activity as donors, diplomatic actors invested in strengthening reforms and fostering democratic developments in Moldova. For example, the Delegation launched calls for proposals for projects in pursuit of common agendas for human rights and democratic reforms, of enhancing the inclusiveness and pluralism of civil society, of promotion of freedom of expression and freedom of the press or fostering the dialogue between civil society and national and local authorities (CNP, 2011). The overall objective of Swedish³² policy was to reduce poverty in developing countries via offering support to civil society actors. This support was mainstreamed through capacity development of civil society organisations and developing their legal and institutional environment (MFA Sweden 2009). The policy aimed at “strengthen[ing] democracy, equitable and sustainable development, and closer ties with the EU and its fundamental values” (ibidem). More specifically, for Moldova, the overall objective of such support aimed at deeper integration with the EU (Embassy Sweden, 2011). It is noteworthy that the policy guidelines were based on several principles, one of them being close cooperation with the EU Delegation and strengthening the civil society role in the EU integration agenda. The Czech Strategy specified its European involvement in the programming of financial instruments such as the ENPI while locally, in Moldova, the Czech embassies set out to work as facilitators in implementation of EU development projects (ibidem). It also explained that cooperation with civil society would take place on an individual level, directly with nongovernmental organisations, and through the established system of cooperation – the Czech Forum for Development Cooperation. For Moldova, there were several sectoral priorities established for cooperation – environment, agriculture and social development (MFA CZ, 2011). For the Polish counterpart, developing civil society, promoting democracy and fostering free media and human rights were one of the main guidelines for providing aid (MFA Poland, 2010).

Besides contributing to the general EU budget from which the EU provides assistance to countries like Moldova (data presented in Table 8), Ukraine and

³² In 2009, these countries happened to hold the Presidency of the EU (January-June: Czech Republic and July-December: Sweden), this however had little significance over the initiatives mentioned here to portray the donor activities performed by the MS which were a continuation of the previous initiatives launched by their respective MFAs.

Belarus, member states also developed bilateral strategies and instruments designed for their relationship with local civil society. To name just a few: in Moldova, between 1999 and 2011 the United Kingdom funded bilateral projects in Moldova in the sum of c. mil. €44 (British Embassy, 2011); Sweden, through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) allocated €13 million between 2011-2014 (State Chancellery , 2013) and the Czech Republic €14 million between 20011-2017 (Embassy CZ, 2014). To further bilateral cooperation, the Swedish government decided on a long-term commitment for continued support to EaP countries detailed in its Strategy for 2014-2020, according to which Swedish support to Moldova would amount to 14 million Euros annually (Embassy Sweden, 2015). Even a smaller embassy, such as that of Slovakia, for example, offered non-repayable financial contribution from the SlovakAid programme in sum of 10,000 EUR per project (Embassy SK, 2017).

The empirical information collected in Moldova shows that there had developed an institutionalised form of interaction between the EU and national diplomatic actors, also in their role as donors (see Table 12). The data collected during the field-trips can be used to construct a typology of a communication infrastructure. This typology groups meetings based on level (participation based on diplomatic rank), focus (participation based on topic), membership (participation based on group affiliation), and formality (degree of ceremonialism of the meeting). Whereas data was initially collected in 2011, field-trips to Moldova in 2013 and 2015 confirmed that these meetings continued to take place under the same headings.

Participation based on *level* reflects the diplomatic ranking of the attendees and referred to regular EU-MS meetings which were the HoMs meetings or the weekly meetings of the Heads of Delegations (HoD): the average of these meetings between 2011 and 2015 have been every two weeks (interv. 29). Also part of this category were the meetings of the deputy HoDs and those of the counsellors. The regular meetings were hosted by the Delegation; when they referred to relations with local civil society they gathered together representatives of the diplomatic missions (except the HoD) as well as the representatives of MS aid agencies. The HoD meetings were more frequent, were arranged in relation to most important developments in these countries and usually required unanimity.

Table 12: Communication infrastructure between MS embassies and EUD in Moldova, 2011-2015		
Typology	Heading	Frequency
Level	<i>EU-member states general meetings</i>	
	(1) HoMs: Meetings of Heads of Delegation (HoDs)	Weekly: every week on political issues, occasionally on civil society issues (approx. two–three times per year)
	(2) Deputy HoDs meetings	Monthly
	(3) Counsellor’s meetings	Monthly: at least once every two months → six per year
Topic	(1) Thematic EU (donor) meetings / Sectoral cooperation	Monthly, also can be quarterly, called on the following topics: - Justice sector reform - Development and aid - Human rights - Trade/Economic development - Transnistria
	(2) Consultations with other EU donors	Called based on necessity
	(3) Member states’ roundtables	
Group affiliation	<i>EU (donor) meetings within regional frameworks of cooperation</i>	
	(1) Visegrad Group (or V4)	once per year
	(2) Nordic group (or Nordic Plus)	occasionally
Formality	(1) Formal events	Organized based on the yearly agendas of EU delegations and member states’ embassies; at least one event per actor
	(2) Non-formal events	<i>Information not disclosed</i>
<i>Source: Author’s compilation based on fieldwork conducted in Moldova between 2011 - 2015</i>		

Participation based on *topic* reflected the focus of the diplomatic meetings and were considered sectorial cooperation by diplomats (interv. 39). The thematic (EU) donor meetings had a specific agenda, were narrow in scope and were conducted at the level of the counsellors based on their sectorial specialisation. The consultations with other (EU) donors were meetings distinctive for the EU delegation and were called before launching its regular local calls for proposals for civil society project funding. National embassies hosted round-tables, a type of meet and greet event, where civil society actors were invited in order to get acquainted with the diplomatic donor community and vice-versa. *Group affiliation* participation was based on membership of a particular group. In Moldova (as well as in the other countries) these have been identified as regional groups such as the Visegrad Group and the Nordic Plus group.

More details on the specifics of the two groups are presented in section 4.4., under 'relevance'. Last but not least, the EU diplomatic actors also interacted within formal and non-formal events such as those organised by relevant stakeholders in each country as well as lunch, dinner or an "occasional coffee". Participation was not mandatory, nor was it exclusive to EU counterparts only. These events provided an opportune framework to exchange recent information or brainstorm on new activities, thus mainly a networking possibility.

Despite differences in typology, according to the interviewees, all these meetings aimed at sharing information, presenting strategies, programmes and projects, insights from consultations with local organisations and other activities pertinent to civil society support; the participants aimed at coordination. This coordination was to be achieved through sharing of diplomatic resources; the meetings representing the primary mechanism for this. National diplomats explained that: "communication about our individual activities presented in the form of oral reports is the main activity" (interv. 8). Yet this brief account of the types of meetings shared by EU diplomatic actors in Moldova does not account for the challenges faced by them while jointly accessing this communication infrastructure. Also, diplomats indicated that as result of the interaction in these meetings was "the common message sent to the Moldovan authorities: to tie Moldova closer to our countries and to come closer to the EU market" (interv. 38). The most frequent examples of the issues discussed in the meeting to achieve a common position or deliver a common message referred to the human rights situation in Moldova, the justice sector reforms or the situation in Transnistria (interv. 41, 38, 39). One such example was the sanctions regime established for Transnistria, namely, the Romanian counterpart was able to set up a report on this matter to which both the EU and the member-states commonly agreed (interv. 41).

The way diplomats engage in these meetings relates to the discussion that is carried out in section 4.4. regarding the second criterion, relevance; while how this infrastructure becomes a resource is discussed in section 4.5. regarding capabilities, the third criterion. Before that, we now turn to investigating the diplomatic practices of representing the Union in Moldova, the goal to be attained according to the Lisbon Treaty and of interest to the first criteria, effectiveness.

4.3. Effectiveness: representing the Union

Post Lisbon, the EU Delegations acquired legal recognition that upgraded the former Commission representations to full-blown EU delegations, an integral part of the EEAS tasked to represent the Union and act in close cooperation with member-states diplomatic and consular missions (art. 221 TFEU). The task of representing the EU as a whole given to the EUD has been embraced by both the Delegation and the MS embassies. Hence, the main division of tasks regarding representation is straightforward: the EUDs represent the interests of the EU as a whole, while every MS represents its own interests which are based on bilateral relations with the host country (here: Moldova). The responsibility of representation and coordination has been taken over by most delegations from early 2010 (European Council, 2010); this was mainly possible due to the fact that in Moldova the Commission representation was present before Lisbon and had been involved in coordinating certain activities or meetings and representing the EU context.

Retrospectively diplomats recalled that at the beginning of the Lisbon Treaty there was not much change as the EEAS as an organisation was not active in 2009 and this meant that locally, the member-state holding the Presidency had to be in touch with Brussels and their Permanent representation in Brussels and be in direct contact with DG Relex and DG Trade (interv. 28, 29, 30, 41). This was coupled with the Presidency's role of coordination and representation of the interests of all member-states in the host country. The practical result of the Treaty, as a diplomat in the Delegation explained, was that there was no Presidency and the EU chaired the meetings and represented member-states at the EU level in relation with the host country (interv. 26). Hence, the role of the Delegation became extremely important after the Lisbon Treaty since there was no rotating Presidency: "immediately after the Lisbon Treaty they were not so active and the rotating Presidencies were involved but had less work to do and gradually the role of the Delegation has grown" (interv. 28). Some emphasized that this gave them an advantage to focus on their own priorities in Moldova: "the role of the Delegation is crucial as member-states can put more emphasis on other fields of importance to them like ecology or climate change or any other area" (interv. 29).

In regard to representation in particular, in Moldova, EU diplomacy became ‘the common denominator’ (interv. 29) in member states’ bilateral relations with the host country. Interviewees mentioned in several instances that the Lisbon Treaty made the EU Delegation the analogue of the conventional embassy with a political agenda with emphasis on issues of security and human rights and political affairs (interv. 28, 29). In the local media it was the voice of the EU Head of Delegation that resonated in society and was taken as that of the EU Ambassador (interv. 28). As the EU diplomat explained, “The EU Delegation is seen as a very important interlocutor for the EU and brings a high profile for media exposure in the country, especially since there is a multidimensional relationship with a neighbouring country that embraces deeper relations in the light of the AA and DCFTA” (interv. 26). And, because the EUD represented the largest single donor for development assistance in Moldova, it had high leverage in the context of cooperation with the government and “this makes them a natural leader” (interv. 39).

Post Lisbon, with a decline in the role of the EU Presidency, meant that the EUD took over the coordinating role, including in the Community areas. Whereas the initial expectations were that this would be a highly difficult logistical effort for the newly established delegations, in practice, the level of engagement with the member state embassies was relatively high. There was a positive change post Lisbon of a better coordination and a higher level of involvement of all parties (interv. 41). Before the Commission representation was established in 2005, there were few member-states involved in generating a platform for cooperation: “UK was most active, they also were offering a lot of assistance. Now, in general, assistance has decreased with the exception of Sweden and Germany. France has a complementary input with small but quick contributions” (interv. 32). Officers from the Delegation recalled that there was not much diplomatic activity regarding local coordination with the member-states and it was with the Lisbon Treaty that the role of the Delegation increased (interv. 32). At the same time, national diplomats shared the post-Lisbon practices where “the Delegation takes the lead when a paper needs to be drafted and they cannot and should not do it on their own - then they look for volunteers among member-states” (interv. 30).

In practice, the EU Delegation was the one that had the permanent Presidency in a host country (interv. 31). Post-Lisbon, it was the Delegation that hosted the HoMs meetings (HoD meetings in Table 12) and, depending on issues, another range of meetings on economic, development, political matters that were grouped in sectorial groups (meetings by topics in Table 12). There was also an increased engagement of development counsellors meeting: these did not meet always but had a regular frequency. Officers in the Delegation exemplified that “there are the bi-weekly Head of Delegation meetings chaired by the HoD of the EU Delegation, there are meetings of political officers, development and cooperation officers that meet at least once a month and also ad-hoc or for events” (interv. 31). For example there could be the economic counsellor’s meetings that made general observations on the economic trends in Moldova and were hosted more often in comparison to the one on consular affairs that happened four times a year only. It was the EUD that had the role of chairing these meetings and setting the agenda, to which comments could be added. Sometimes there were even meetings for more acute issues; and then for lunch meetings the EUD also invited someone external who was also dealing with these issues in this sector: IMF, WB or others (interv. 38, 39). Some noticed that, as result, the intensity of daily work had increased (interv. 27). This change came about because each country used to hold the Presidency and chair meetings, but now the Delegation ran the meetings and had to be in charge.

The Delegation itself perceived its role as that of a coordinator and manager, hence the meetings were the responsibility of the EU (interv. 25, 26) and “we (the Delegation) reflect on the position taken in Brussels and act as interlocutor” (interv. 26). It was common practice that the Delegation had meetings with different DG representatives when these were visiting and thereafter presented the results to the member-states, including their first remarks on any statements or reports, and collected viewpoints from the member-states (interv. 27). Reflecting on their practice of diplomacy post-Lisbon, interviewees emphasized the effectiveness that came from the chairing role embraced by the Delegation as result of the withdrawal of the Presidency function. The Delegation took the lead when a document needed to be drafted, this could be in the form of a paper or a report; the process also involved member-states, some of which helped to develop these reports through offering comments (interv. 27, 30). According to national diplomats, the Delegation would

take on board these reports, “it does not do anything against it, we work in a collegial way and there is an opportunity for them to voice their opinions. In Moldova, there is no difference in views unlike my experience in Tunisia where views were based on economic issues and that is why opinion diverged: the Italian-French one versus the Anglo-Saxon one. The issues in Moldova of good governance, transparency, democracy or human rights are less important and then common interests prevail” (interv. 30).

In assuming this leading role, the Delegation formalised the practices of cooperation, according to representatives of the EU Delegation (interv. 31, 32). According to national diplomats, the main instrument of the EUD were the common meetings which acted as a coordinating instrument (interv. 41). The Delegation would discuss and conduct consultations with member-states; MS would get instructions from their capitals and then the common position was presented in Brussels: “we consult for a common position or a certain position” (interv. 31). The culture of reporting together became a shared practice among the Delegation and national embassies. Diplomats confirmed that “the Delegation takes on board our opinions, on Transnistria for example, it is considerate of our know-how and that it is an added-value” (interv. 30). It was the common meetings that allowed for the opportunity to draft reports together and for the Delegation to take a lead as one of the EU diplomats stated “we are representing all member-states and the role of the Delegation is to lead” (interv. 31). In this way, as interviewees noticed, not only discussions were initiated but also common démarches could be made (interv. 41).

National diplomats put emphasis on the fact that centralization happened with this type of activity performed by the Delegation that resembled that of a secretariat and “are happy to have the EU Delegation present in Moldova. For us, a small embassy, it is helpful to have access to more resources and more people. The role is that of the rotating Presidency, activities are coordinated by the Delegation which makes it easier and better as a process and it is good to keep this dynamic of the diplomatic activity; for example idea-sharing is a positive emphasis” (interv. 27). Others reiterated this point explaining that for the Delegation it was easier to organize the work of cooperation with Brussels than for national embassies who had national obligations and had to, first and foremost, represent their state. This secretarial role

can also be quite a logistical burden for member-states, therefore they welcomed the fact that the Delegation had embraced this function: “in my previous post in Central Asia, where there was no EU Delegation I had to host meetings on the premises of our embassy and also, at times, had to represent other member-states; all the different complications could be avoided if there was a Delegation” (interv. 29).

It is important to note, that post-Lisbon developments not only focused on the Union Delegations representing the Union, but also the Treaty anticipated that in third countries, the EU Delegation would step up their cooperation with the member-state embassies towards a common approach (art. 32). Therefore, the next section, focuses on the diplomatic practices that developed in this sense in Moldova.

4.4. Relevance: ‘common approach’ in Chisinau

Relevance is a criterion that assesses corporate diplomatic practices as operationalised in Chapter 3, in relation to member-states embassies and the EU delegation formulating and implementing a common approach. What comes across from the material in the previous sections in this chapter and the interviews conducted in Moldova is that for both sides, the EU and the national diplomats, the common approach, stipulated in the Lisbon Treaty, referred, in the conduct of their diplomatic activity, to a common message or a common position vis-à-vis the local authorities. The way the process usually worked, as diplomats explained it, is that every member-state would send a person or a team to the COEST³³ working group in Brussels, where they met regularly and worked together, and this is the place where the formulation of the common approach happened: “in this proceedings and through the dialogue in the working groups we try to achieve common ground” (interv. 28). On certain issues, reports from Brussels would be sent to the Delegation who, in turn, presented the draft to the member-states and afterwards inserted their input. In this process, member-states tried to find some answers for important

³³ COEST is The Working Party on Eastern Europe and Central Asia handles all aspects of EU relations and cooperation with countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Its work also includes frameworks for multilateral cooperation, such as the ENP and the EaP. This Council working party (nr. C.9) examines the legislative proposals by the European Commission in its field of expertise that are sent to the Council of Ministers. This body is composed of experts from each member state and is chaired by the delegate of the country holding the rotating six-month presidency of the Council. After examination the proposals will be forwarded to the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC). Whereas no evidence was collected on the information flow between the Delegations and COEST, data shows that that information from MS embassies are transferred to COEST via the MFAs and their respective representations in Brussels. No information has been disclosed regarding the extent to which COEST works on the reports that come from the Delegations themselves.

questions regarding how to deal with certain issues or how to promote European values in Moldova: “there is a creative dialogue among member-states in this sense” (ibidem). Evidence shows that besides Romania, the UK, Sweden and Poland were involved in drafting reports which were then circulated and discussed. The work was done at the Deputy Head of mission level or it could be at the level of First Secretary, as in the case of Romania, for example (interv. 30).

Although coordination was more a matter for the capitals (interv. 27) the diplomats in host countries were the ones who implemented the results. What happened on the ground then, was joint action (interv. 31). EU diplomats shared their experience in this sense and stated that member-states were not reluctant to cooperate: “the tendency is to not overlap but to complement each other. Sweden, for example, being a big donor in Moldova makes sure that the programs implemented by them take this into consideration. As a Swedish diplomat explained, in Moldova “there is also the issue of joint programming³⁴ that now focuses on everyone getting onto speed; conducting a common analysis of the situation and complementing each other as well as possible in order not to duplicate our efforts” (interv. 38). A Romanian diplomat also underlined that through joint programming, better support could be brought to Moldova by the diplomatic community (interv. 41).

During the 2010-2015 period, there were several positive examples that illustrate such a trend in diplomatic activity. Germany and Sweden scaled up their assistance and they teamed-up and divided a considerable amount of money into concrete actions. Another example is a pilot project started in 2014 was upgraded in 2016 with funds from Germany, Sweden and Romania were channelled for regional cohesion activities on developing a pipeline and the EU extended the project through a financial input (interv. 31). On migration and asylum there was a range of projects initiated by Romania: in 2014 Romania started a project on migration that developed into a common project conducted together with the EU. A part of the money came from the Romanian side and the other from the EU’s budget support provided to Moldova. In another range of projects, in the context of visa liberalization, Romania was invited by the EU to get involved; an involvement requested due to the added value of having a Romanian counterpart (interv. 41). Another similar example of joint

³⁴ Joint programming implies the joint planning of development cooperation by the EU development partners working in a partner country.

actions and programming was the Austrian and German cooperation on water management projects that the EU also topped-up financially (interv. 31). There were also co-financing agreements between Germany, Sweden, Romania, the EU, which did not come with an obligation: “every member-state can decide how to implement this; it is mainly an exercise where every party can learn and it is a task not easy to accomplish” (interv. 39).

Empirical evidence showed that the common approach during the period 2010-2015 was not a single approach, it was different depending on area as there was more member-state interest on certain issues, but it has been noted that there was a general priority on listening and providing input (interv. 39). And the fact that post-Lisbon there was higher level of involvement of the EU Delegation (as highlighted in the previous section) and in general all members of the EU diplomatic community present in Moldova played their part in reaching this common approach (interv. 41). This was coupled with the fact that the frequency of meetings (presented in Table 12) could be adjusted on the go and the coordination meetings were well balanced (interv. 39). Some also emphasized the size of the diplomatic community in Moldova as another driver towards a common approach: “there is a like-minded small diplomatic community which is unified in its position in terms of how to deal with the government; and this is different from my previous experience and I find this situation unusual if I compare it to my previous posting in Tunisia” (interv. 30). National diplomats considered that it was important to have the Delegation provide this instrument of exchange of information through the common meetings (interv. 39, 41). Especially because “the general common approach is to encourage Moldova to implement the provisions of the AA [...] and to solidify the EU message towards Moldovan authorities, to increase our visibility and to have a common frontline” (interv. 41). Moldova’s European aspirations became a driving force for the EU’s common approach: “every national embassy does certain things in the bilateral dimension of diplomacy but we work as a team in helping Moldova on its European path and the Delegation’s role is big and important” (interv. 28). It seems that the performance of the common approach depended on the success of Moldova in implementing reforms and of developments in the region (interv. 27).

Nonetheless, there was a duality in the nature of diplomatic practice in Moldova between 2010-2015. For instance, France or the Czech Republic could have different opinions, but on the main topics the position was the same and this remained central in establishing a common position. Some diplomats argued that it could be more influential for the common approach when member-states had different views on policy issues (interv. 39). Clearly, the common position did not happen ad-hoc, it was the result of debate and the sharing of ideas amongst participants in the meetings hosted by the Delegation. As some diplomats clarified, “the common position is the product of continuous consolidation; own position becomes closer to the common one due to closer cooperation, there are some nuances, some have more remarks, but overall everyone is more supportive” (interv. 27). The other facet of this is that, given that the diplomatic community in Moldova is small, not every member-state was represented and it is not clear how the position of the missing member-states was taken on board (interv. 41). They were, by definition, represented by the EU, but they did not have the same opportunity to take part in the debates or the on-going discussions. Some interviewees also raised the issue of the frequency of the meetings which might be counterproductive to the purpose it was supposed to serve, i.e. ensuring that member-states did not interfere with each other bilaterally: “having too many meetings results in producing meeting notes rather than joint actions” (interv. 39). It was also time-consuming: “when you get involved in this you cannot engage in something else” (interv. 30). Diplomats in the Delegation also observed that member-states had different time schedules or the timing did not correspond to their national programming, hence, what happened in practice was not joint programming; more time and harmonization of themes was needed (interv. 31). So avoiding differences was rather impossible (interv. 27).

At the same time, the approach, interest and political weight was different when sometimes different member-states would promote some people or their own interests (interv. 29). Member-states might have different tactics or reasons for promoting coordination (interv. 27). What becomes obvious in the Moldovan case, for example, is that Western European member-states were less interested in this country than the Central European ones, whose internal situation, individual approach and economic situation have a real impact in Moldova: “Romania is an eloquent example, whose voice is being heard, but, other actors might have more

possibilities for action” (interv. 29). The scope of action played a role as well as the expertise: who specializes on what, on environment or energy, could become a dividing line in achieving complementarity, for example (interv. 31). As a French diplomat clarified, “the France-Germany cooperation is not really working as there is too much asymmetry. They have specific policy objectives that we do not share. Moreover, on policy advising, the Germans are very involved on advising the Moldovan authorities, hence very involved in Moldovan internal politics” (interv. 40).

Affinity to a certain group of countries can also create a dividing line on the matter of common positions. Evidence showed that the interaction among EU diplomatic actors often resulted in different interest constellations. Member state embassies in Moldova (but also in Ukraine) admitted that they cluster into different groups of interest: it was the EU donor meetings within regional frameworks of cooperation (as presented in Table 12) that offered the platform for doing so. The Visegrad Group (Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia), commonly known as the V4, “reflects the efforts of the countries of the Central European region to work together in a number of fields of common interest within the all-European integration” (Visegrad Group, 2013). The other regional framework, the Nordic Plus Group, represented a group of the ‘like-minded donors’ (Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark the UK, Ireland and the Netherlands) that were committed to enhancing aid effectiveness - from which emerged the principle of ‘good donorship’ (Norad, 2006; interv. 18, 19). These two groups exhibited various examples of formulating a common approach and implementing it, i.e. sharing resources and engaging in joint projects (for instance, the V4 reconstruction of summer camps in Moldova). It is important to note that these groups did not include the Delegation which was not invited even as an observer to these meetings. During the common meetings, under the auspices of the EUD, these groups did not report on their collective activities, strategies or plans. It also happened that countries chose to cooperate under the pressure of certain issues such as minorities or illegal migration. Or it may be that member states clustered non-formally, under certain themes. In Moldova, Poland, Sweden, Romania and, on occasions, Lithuania coordinated together on EaP related issues, outside EUD premises.

For the Baltics, the easiest cooperation in the period studied was with the Baltic colleagues and it came naturally: “we know the region, we have experience, we have big interests for the host-country and there is high flow of information among us” (interv. 27). For the Swedish counterparts it was often the case of collaboration with like-minded partners, especially in the instance when their natural allies from the Nordic group do not have a diplomatic mission in Chisinau (e.g.: the Netherlands or Finland) : “we try to have contacts with the Baltics and the Estonian counter-part who is hosted by us. We are in a position of finding other like-minded partners, like Poland or Lithuania and sometimes other Central European colleagues. The approach to the EaP and its understanding is different to different member-states and this has more to do with national interests” (interv. 38). Diplomats also mentioned that in the case of their colleagues that have dossiers on Moldova, but operate from their Bucharest or Kiev representations, the Delegation ‘is of no help’ in assisting member-states missions to Moldova that do not have diplomatic missions in Chisinau (interv. 27); so they prefer to contact their natural partner (e.g.: the Dutch would call on the Swedish or the German counterpart). Diplomatic missions like Germany for instance, did not like multilateral cooperation and preferred a bilateral approach (interv. 40). The same held true for Poland with their “go-it-alone” tactics who preferred to pursue a parallel national agenda (Baltag & Smith, 2015). Others, like the UK, were at the centre for drafting reports because they wanted to influence the process (interv. 30). Some (Poland, Romania, Hungary or Slovakia) lobbied the EUD strongly; being very active in pushing for their own interests since, as neighbouring countries of the host countries, they felt more confident in their national line of diplomacy than in the EU one. Being so focused on the primacy of their national diplomatic expertise often hampered the pursuit of a common approach and could be seen as short-sighted. This, in turn, left room for mistakes: such as confusing instances of bilateral track diplomacy with the (EU) multilateral one. The fact that Romania is Moldova’s advocate in the EU is well-known, yet its actions on the ground could be seen as provocative by other members of the diplomatic community: “in Moldova, Romania advises the Moldovan authorities, so information from the general meetings leaks to the Moldovan government and this leads to reluctance to cooperate; and become less transparent” (interv. 40). Diplomats therefore mentioned that in the case of Romania specifically there were certain

peculiarities related to their national interests in Moldova (interv. 38) and they became reluctant to cooperate with them or to share certain information (interv. 40).

As a reflection regarding the common approach, national diplomats stressed the importance of having more common lobby strategies in cooperation with the local authorities, which they expected to come as an initiative from the Delegation (interv. 39, 40). Some highlighted that the Delegation was keeping a close eye on the developments in the country (meaning that the Delegation was taking note of the stagnation of reforms in Moldova), but it seems that the headquarters (referred to in the interviews as Brussels) wanted a more 'rosy picture', therefore "coordination of MS include checking the notes that tailor the EUD reports" (interv. 38). It was sometimes the case that the Delegation was unaware of certain problematic situations that member-states were facing: this was the case of a French national being suspected of terrorism and sent to France without getting in touch with the French embassy or the Delegation. Whereas the French counterpart informed the Delegation about the situation, "the Delegation does not know how to deal with such instances as coordination is not working on policy or political matters, but mainly on aid" (interv. 40). The weakness of Moldova–EU diplomatic relations during the period under examination seems to lie in the exercise of lobbying the Moldovan authorities as a common front. For the EU Delegation in Moldova, the common approach was, in the context of different EU member states' interests, the result of a compromise between a more technical and a more political approach towards the host country: "the Delegation is very focused on technical aid coordination" (interv. 40). Even if technical aid took most space in the diplomatic cooperation between member-states and the Delegation, diplomats noticed over time that the Delegation itself was reluctant to upgrade the cooperation to joint programming (*ibidem*). Others experienced that fact that the Delegation would not let member-states see 'their cards' so "we cannot look into the recommendations given (...) or the reports that go to Brussels" (interv. 39). Furthermore on this issue member-states questioned whether the Head of Delegation could be double-hatted when he needed to present a unified message and needed to be clear where this message was coming from (interv. 38, 39). In Chisinau, some national diplomats found that what was lacking was cooperation on policy matters.

Formulating and implementing a common approach, as can be observed from the data presented here, took place within the communication infrastructure presented in Table 12 (section 4.2.2.) that had developed over time in Moldova and became a major resource. In order to examine this issue, the communication infrastructure as well as other political and social capital that the EU has at its disposal on the ground is presented in the following section.

4.5. Capabilities: diplomatic resources in Chisinau

Earlier in this chapter, we presented a wide and varied typology of the communication infrastructure of the EU Delegation and member-state embassies in Moldova (Table 12). These meetings constituted the mechanism of cooperation, provided a common communication infrastructure and accounted for some degree of institutionalized diplomatic practices. Empirical evidence shows that EU diplomatic actors between 2010-2015 engaged in a high degree of information-sharing including written and oral reports, formal and informal data, as well as exchange of personal contacts. As a result, the EU Delegation started to play a more central role in becoming an informational network hub. National diplomats stated that these information exchanges should be further regularized and better centralized (interv. 3, 6, 30).

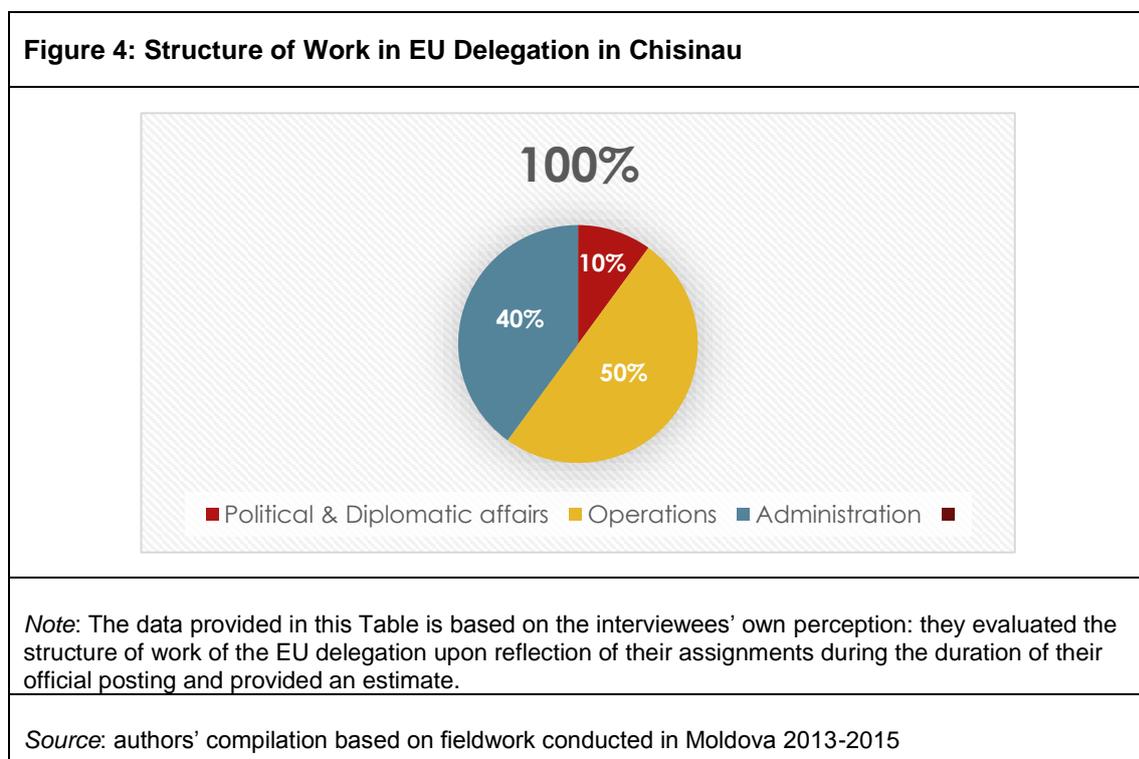
Political officers in the Delegation explained that the Delegation provided an information network to all member-states, and, if the latter were interested, then they could have access to information on particular issues. For the Delegation, this was a resource that was at the disposal of the member-states and could be used as a public relations tool by them. It became a PR tool especially because MS were given access to idea-sharing and report-drafting on such major events as the Vilnius summit and also post-Vilnius, which was of political importance for the EU and for Moldova (interv. 32). Member-states also noted that this was a good tool for cooperation with the EUD and “the EU ambassador tries to really include everyone and he is convinced that without EU members, the EUD does not matter. The focus is on collaboration and coordination” (interv. 38). The Delegation itself also considered that with these meetings, there was more visibility to be gained by the EU as a whole (interv. 32). Activities of these meetings were coordinated by the

Delegation which made it easier and better as a process and created a good dynamic in the diplomatic activity in Moldova, with an emphasis on idea-sharing (interv. 27). Diplomats indicated that the Delegation in Moldova had used this resource, the communication infrastructure, in a very effective manner (interv. 29, 38). As some recognised, “the different common meetings are useful for exchange of opinions and information and also useful in terms of logistics as they host frequent meetings of the EU officials that visit Moldova and we do not have to have such a responsibility” (interv. 29). Another aspect which was appreciated by national diplomats was the openness of these meetings: “everyone knows what the Delegation is writing in terms of the general political message and it is these meetings that create the general political narrative” (interv. 40).

Nonetheless some pointed out a criticism related to the content of these meetings being aid-driven. Diplomats noted on several occasions that in Moldova the conduct of diplomacy was aid-driven and the EU delegations had bigger operational sections than political units (interv. 25; 40). The legacy of Commission representations and a certain path-dependency was thus observed in Moldova. On the one hand, the Commission offices were established as information offices and the EU delegations came to embrace fully the traditional communication function; on the other hand, the EU delegations have also embraced more technical tasks, such as project management, as the Commission offices were established as operational offices. To reiterate, before the Lisbon changes, staff in the Commission representation, were responsible, on a daily basis, for EU aid implementation, with little to no coordination with the member states. There were positive developments post-Lisbon in the sense that it resulted in a wide communication infrastructure, coordinated by the EU delegation and open to all EU member states. In Moldova, there were a lot of donor coordination meetings during the period under examination, and the EU played a crucial role in them (interv. 38, 40). To a large extent the practice of aid-driven activities remained and the communication infrastructure served as a helpful resource for conducting this type of diplomacy.

As Figure 4 below shows, in the opinion of interviewees, the Delegation’s activities between 2013-2015 were divided among operational, administrative, and political and diplomatic issues. Only approximately 10 per cent of the work was seen as related to the main functions of traditional diplomacy such as gathering, synthesizing

and producing information, intelligence and counter-intelligence, producing reports and policy advice for headquarters, representing EU interests through engaging in public diplomacy, or developing economic and commercial cooperation through engaging in trade diplomacy (interv. 25). Approximately 50 per cent of activity (the Commission legacy) was seen as focused on operational activities or what can be coined as sectoral diplomacy tasks, such as project management in the areas of good governance and democratization, economic cooperation and social and regional development, and infrastructure and environment-related developments.



As previously mentioned, diplomatic practice has diversified and expanded to the extent of embracing new functions, such as acting as a donor. Out of all the meetings that took place in Moldova, the ones which focused on policy were the meetings of the Head of Delegations (see Table 12). However, these had a loose format, did not have a pre-set agenda and embraced an open-discussion format; as result these did not focus on EU policy per-se, but mainly reflected an exercise of exchange of views on certain policy issues. These meetings continued to be used for project coordination, and focused a lot on avoiding overlap of projects and contradictions among MS as donors. Diplomats noticed that these meetings, instead

of identifying lobby directions in the relationship with local authorities, for instance, focused mainly on donor-driven subjects, which some identified as a weakness diplomatic practice in Moldova (interv. 39, 40). As a French diplomat in Moldova emphasized, the EU Delegation in Chisinau relied on a lot of technical aid discussions, which is rather outside of what cooperation between the member states and the EU should entail and ‘this is not really how diplomacy functions’ (interv. 40). Since a working group or common meeting on policy matters among EU member-states was not established, it seems that aid-driven diplomacy was the practice that was mostly encouraged and embraced by the Delegation. This is not an atypical type of diplomacy but rather matches with the priorities that stem from the ENP and EaP.

Some interviewees even argued that the type of diplomacy depended on the Head of the Delegation (full list of HoDs in Chisinau is presented in Table 13) whether he geared it toward politics or mainly focused on the technical cooperation level (interv. 39).

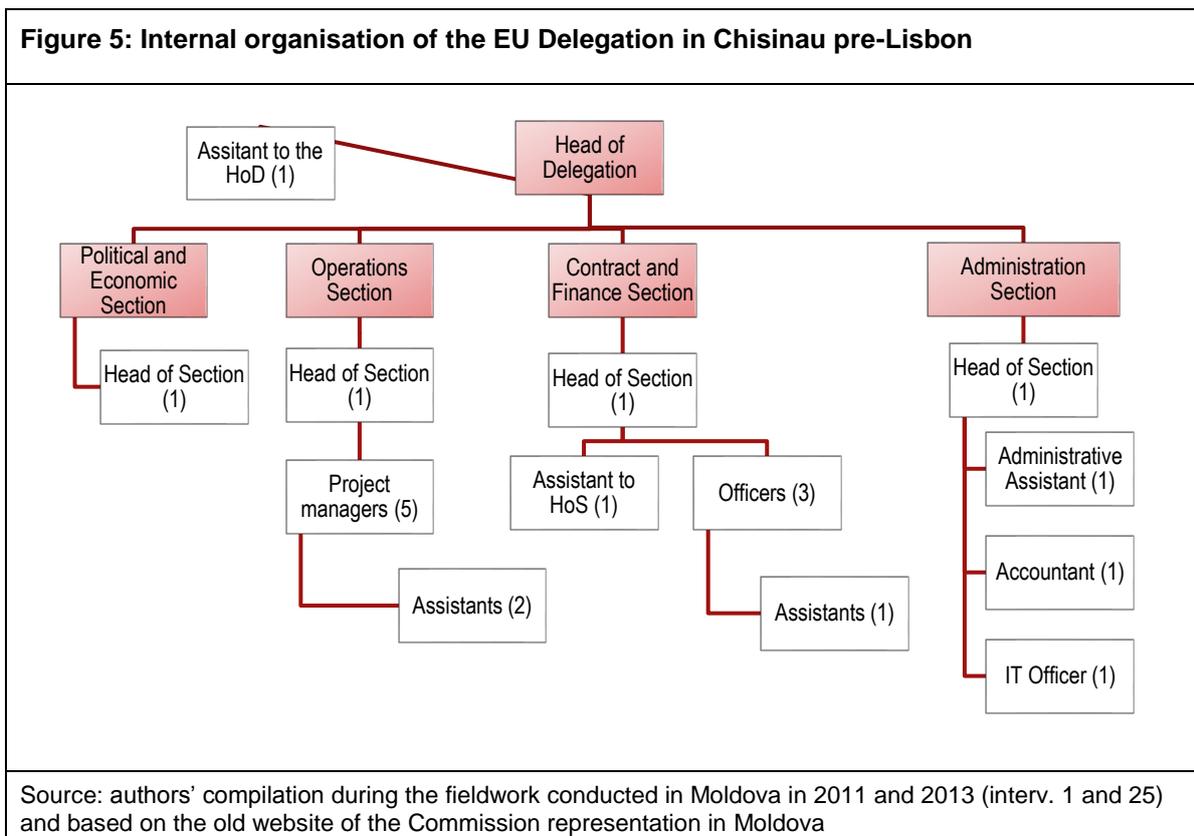
Table 13: Head of EU Delegation in Chisinau: 2005 - 2015		
Nr.	Name	Period in office
1.	Cesare de Montis*	October 2005 – November 2009
2.	Dirk Steffen Schuebel	November 2009 - April 2013
3.	Pirkka Tapiola	April 2013 – September 2017
<i>Note:</i> *Cesare de Montis was Head of Delegation of the Commission Representation in Chisinau		
<i>Source:</i> authors' compilation based on fieldwork conducted in Moldova 2013-2016		

Some noted, for example, that the Head of Delegation meetings (presented in Table 12) were frequent and were focused on information-sharing due to the personality of Mr. Tapiola, the EU Ambassador in Chisinau from 2013 (interv. 40). Yet, the question that national diplomats posed is that of uncertainty and sustainability: it was not certain whether this diplomatic practice would be further embraced by subsequent ambassadors (interv. 27). In retrospect, the 1st Head of Delegation (to be read: Head of Commission representation), Mr. Cesare de Montis, was not really active and engaged with the local community when that was strictly necessary,

mainly through attending selected events. As political officers in the Delegation recalled: “he was focused on the technical implementation rather than on political activism which resulted in no policy-shaping or similar related activities” (interv. 25). The Delegation gained a higher profile and became more active with the accreditation of the second HoD, Mr. Dirk Steffen Schuebel, in November 2009, and the Delegation continued to be engaged through the activity of Mr Schuebel’s successor, Ambassador Pirkka Tapiola (ibidem).

As a general observation, human resource issues were recurrent for both the national and Union diplomatic representations: for example, being understaffed or not sufficiently trained in EU policy-making. For national embassies, the issue of esprit de corps was mainly linked to most embassies being understaffed. Most embassies in Chisinau were and are small to medium-sized, with only two or three diplomats on board. This implies that the latter could not manage the growing intensity of diplomatic activity in Moldova. Taking this into account, raises the question of availability, involvement and visibility for member-states with small embassies like that of Lithuania or the Czech Republic in Moldova. The situation was quite different for a Romanian or German embassy which had the capacity to follow different subjects and themes and attend common meetings, if they wished to do so (interv. 28, 29, 30). As one diplomat mentioned: “we manage to network with all EU colleagues” (interv. 30). Another factor when it comes to human resources is the age range, experience accumulated of all participants and their language skills: being a skilful diplomat and knowing Romanian or at least Russian is extremely important. The downside is a meeting with too many experts on the same subject, which diplomats qualified as counterproductive (interv. 27). Or the situation where only one member-state has the expertise, as was the case of the UK on Transnistria: “the Delegation takes on board our opinions on Transnistria as it is considerate of our know-how and that is an added-value for us” (interv. 30). Personal charm and personality could matter just as much: “cooperation is of course dependent on the people (...) and some embassies work closely because of personalities, much more than others” (interv. 38). In Moldova some of the stronger diplomatic personalities in terms of communication and presence belonged to the British, Swedish, Polish and the EU Delegation while others were more reserved such as the Romanian embassy, although it played a big role in Moldova (interv. 30, 38, 40, 41).

Establishing a European *esprit de corps* is an issue that is not uncommon in the Delegations, just as much as it is in the EEAS (Pomorska & Juncos, 2013; Juncos & Pomorska, 2014). Post-Lisbon, the Delegations on the ground were supposed to have one-third of their personnel from the EEAS and the member-states and thus, to bring the ‘diplomatic’ into the work of the EU delegations which was not the case pre-Lisbon. Figure 5 shows the Delegation’s organigramme before the Lisbon changes. Although it was referred to as the Delegation in Chisinau, pre-Lisbon it was the representation of the European Commission whose activity did not involve traditional diplomacy: as one employee of the Delegation remembered: “back then, there were no political affairs” (interv. 1). Before Moldova, the HoD worked in the European Commission representation in Venezuela and held several posts within the DGs for Development and External Relations. The size of the Delegation was rather small, only 21 staff members, out of which 14 were hired locally (and were Moldovans) operating in the Operations, Contract and Finance Sections and the Administration Section.

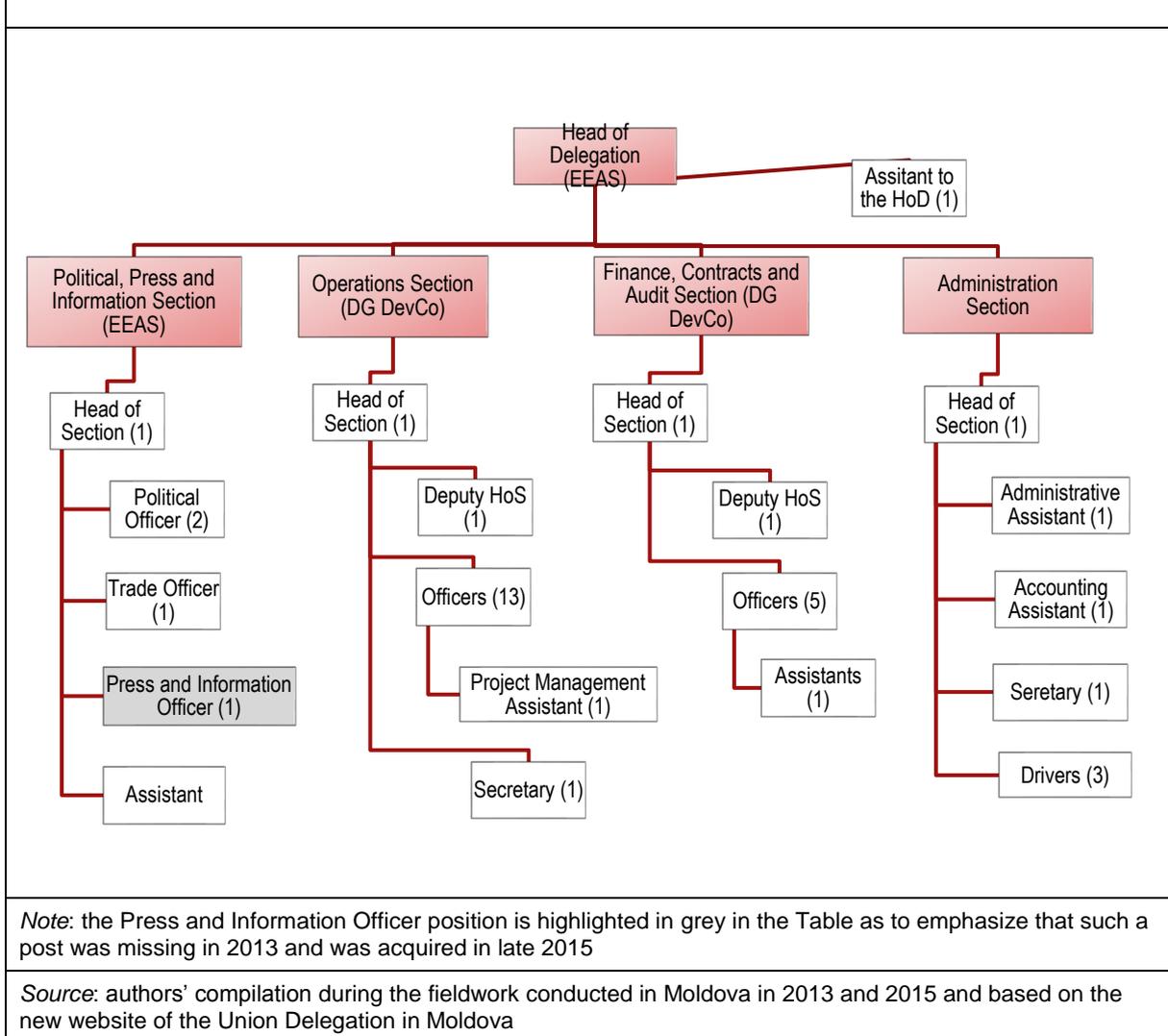


As one can see in Figure 5, the biggest section was the Operations Section (linked to DG DevCo) with 8 team-members and the smallest being the Political and Economic section with only 1 staff member. This Section was in charge of promoting political and economic relations with the EU through participating in meetings and increasing awareness of the EU's programmes and was not mandated to coordinate political matters, not even with DG Relex (interv. 1). Besides this, as part of its mandate the Delegations' staff (especially in the Political and Economic section and in the Operations section) were responsible for monitoring the implementation of primarily the ENP instruments (such as the AP). This implied a high degree of reporting on the progress made by the Moldovan counterpart on its democratic governance reforms, both on FSJ and on trade-related matters; this being done without a Trade Section or a trade officer as part of the Delegation. The structure of the EU Delegation post-Lisbon is shown in Figure 6 (below).

Post-Lisbon the HoDs appointed to Moldova were both national diplomats: Dirk Schuebel (2009-2013) was a diplomat from Germany who had previously served as Head of Political, Press and Information Section and Acting Head of the Delegation of the European Commission to Ukraine and was subsequently Head of Division for the EaP at the EEAS. Pirkka Tapiola (2013-2017) was a Finnish diplomat appointed to the Delegation in Moldova after he served as an EEAS adviser on development issues in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and had previously worked as a Finnish diplomat in Ukraine. Empirical evidence showed that in comparison to pre-Lisbon, the situation in the Delegation had gradually improved and already in 2013 there was more knowledge within the Delegation and better trained operational staff who read reports, analysed, evaluated and provided feedback, which brought more transparency, accountability and quality to the overall management of the Delegation (interv. 25). The staff in the Political section had also increased and was reformed into the Political, Press and Information Section without containing 'trade' in its title but acquiring a Trade Officer as part of this Section. Later, in 2016, the team had a new addition: the Press and Information Officer. The general staff number of the Delegation also grew by 16 team-members and formed a total of 37 staff in comparison to the previous 21. Out of the total number of staff, 26 came from the Commission and 11 came from the EEAS as previously shown in Table 8 (Chapter 2, section 2.2.2.). Just as pre-Lisbon, the Operations section was the biggest one,

counting 17 members which represented 48% of the total staff in the Delegation. If pre-Lisbon all officers in this Section were locally hired, post-Lisbon, only 4 out of 13 were Moldovans.

Figure 6: Internal organisation of the EU Delegation in Chisinau in 2013-2015



It is curious to note that the Trade Officer was locally hired, was positioned under the Political Section while his reports, on the progress that Moldova has made on trade-related matters in the AA, for example, were submitted internally to the Operations Unit (DG DevCo) whereas his position was formally under DG Trade (interv. 25). There was also the issue, in 2013, of a questionable choice of diplomats: the Deputy HoD and Head of Political Unit was a former cultural attaché to China who had no knowledge of the local languages in use or the political realities. Under his duties were also trade-related issues for which he needed to report to DG Trade and not the EEAS without having a political officer as member of his Section (interv. 25).

However, interviewees acknowledged that post-Lisbon there were trained diplomats coming from the member-states and the EEAS to the Delegation and, together with the people from the Commission, already present in the Delegation, this created a mixture between national and Commission personnel (interv. 26). Political officers in the Delegation considered that this had enhanced the work of the Delegation as there were new people and new perspectives that, generally speaking, strengthened the effectiveness of the Delegation and improved cooperation with member-states (ibidem). Yet these were national diplomats, who were former employees of their MFAs and who, after spending four years in the host country, would return not to the EEAS in Brussels but to their national MFAs. Whereas technically this might not seem a problem in third countries, the EU delegation staff perceived this initially (in 2011) as negative: national diplomats found it difficult to detach themselves from their background, so they were preaching national diplomacy instead of European diplomacy and following national interests (interv. 1). In 2015, this sentiment was shared by the Delegation's staff to a lesser extent.

At times what became visible was the fact that member-states had little knowledge or understanding about how the Commission worked or had little knowledge of the internal structure of the Delegation, which made cooperation confusing or frustrating when it came to reporting to DG Trade or DG DevCo for the staff in the Delegation (interv. 25). In this sense, member-state diplomats have also pointed out that one could sense a form of competition between the Commission-side and the EEAS-side in discussing issues such as joint programming (interv. 39). Others referred to them as tensions that resembled the ones in Brussels, namely when member-states witnessed certain internal dynamics in the Delegation which were labelled through comments such as "it is what DG Trade does and what can you expect? Instructions are not so good, but this is DG Trade!" (interv. 30). As one project manager in the Delegation noticed, "before Lisbon there was unity as everyone was under the Commission, post-Lisbon there is a division of staff under MS (EEAS) and under the Commission" (interv. 25).

During the fieldwork conducted in Moldova, it became obvious that there was a general issue of intra-Delegation coordination in which tensions in Brussels transmitted themselves to the delegation and on-the-ground diplomacy. The so

called Brussels ‘turf-war’ was an institutional issue on the ground that echoed Brussels inter-institutional dynamics: internally, the Delegation reflected the tensions between the European Commission and the EEAS in Brussels. Structurally, there were two parts within the Delegation: the Commission part, represented by the DG DevCo and the DG Trade personnel³⁵; and the EEAS part, represented by national diplomats. This was a huge logistical challenge. When the EEAS was established the idea was to have all foreign policy instruments under one roof, which did not happen in the case of the Delegation in Chisinau. For instance, within each EU delegation there is a public procurement office, which is also staffed by Commission personnel. The EEAS did not have its own budget until 2011, and the Commission refused to provide professional advice to the EEAS personnel within the EU delegations. EU delegation staff had to learn the basics of running public tenders and writing contracts, which was not part of the job description of a political officer (interv. 1). Another interesting post-Lisbon development, as a result of the turf wars in Brussels, is that after abolishing the position of the EUSR in Moldova, who had a separate budget and information network, the institutional memory of that position was not transferred to colleagues in the Delegation (interv. 32). This implied that the political officer who was tasked with Transnistria would have to do an enormous amount of work and basically start from scratch.

The European Commission staff worked on technical issues in the area of good governance, rule of law, education, corruption and energy, which are sensitive matters and which are all very political in nature. The EEAS personnel were in charge of the political agenda, however, there were instances when these were not consulted on the reports on the sectoral issues monitored by the Commission personnel in the Delegation – these were sent directly to Brussels, bypassing the political officers. Assistance is the institutional responsibility of the Commission and DG DevCo is a big actor with instruments in foreign policy in this sense. As political officers in the Delegation observed, there was little coordination and little coherence between DG DevCo and the EEAS (interv. 32). And even though the HoD is double-hatted, in practice, the Ambassador could not know, influence or be informed about the drafting procedures adopted by the DG DevCo personnel; could not participate in tenders; and there is no decision-making participation since these institutions are

³⁵ Until recently (2015), the EU Delegation in Chisinau did not have a trade officer.

different. As a result of this, the DG DevCo unit informed the political unit in the Delegation 'just as much as they informed the public', meaning that it was sent directly to the HoD for signing, without giving an opportunity to the political officers to provide feedback (interv. 25, 32).

To reiterate, in Moldova, EU diplomatic capabilities changed post-Lisbon (2010-2015) with certain positive dynamics as well as facing certain challenges. There was a strong communication infrastructure coordinated by the Delegation and at the disposal of member-states, where diplomatic exchanges took place. The Delegation in Chisinau grew in size and, most importantly, had an increasing number of diplomats as staff members, the first being the second head of Delegation, Mr. Schuebel, appointed in November 2009. Yet, the development of the Delegation also brought with it the so called Brussels 'turf-war': an institutional issue on the ground that echoed Brussels inter-institutional dynamics.

4.6. Conclusion

This Chapter has presented, in a structured manner, the empirical evidence collected during the field-work conducted in Moldova as well as evidence collected from the study of secondary sources such as policy briefs, legislation, national and international reports as well as academic findings from scholarly literature on Moldova-EU. Adopting a historical approach, the development of Moldova-EU relations has been laid out. It showed that there has been an institutionalisation of this relationship under the PCA, the ENP and EaP respectively and since 2005 the diplomatic representation of the EU has laid its foundations in Chisinau, alongside national embassies already present in Moldova. Structurally the evidence has been presented according to the three criteria – effectiveness, relevance and capabilities – operationalised in the previous chapter.

Effectiveness, operationalised as goal attainment, has been presented on two dimensions: one that explores the degree of democratic governance in Moldova and the other that investigates the diplomatic practices of representing the Union in Moldova. The analysis of the sustainability of ENP goals in Moldova highlighted that when it comes to democratic governance, Moldova was advancing between 2010-

2015 in relation to the level of adaptation to EU rules and norms, i.e. approximation to the EU acquis, as stipulated in the AA. Yet, in its path to reforms, many actions were not implemented and the data presented here highlights that despite having a solid legal framework, Moldova manifested significant lacunae during the implementation process. Whereas the heavy burden of implementing reforms lay with the Moldovan counterpart, the AA implies commitment from the EU counterpart as well. The activity of diplomatic actors on the ground channelled their effort to try to create a proper climate and atmosphere that could bring peace and development in Moldova. Through many of their activities, diplomats were aligned in their efforts to be of help to Moldova in implementing its European vocations and achieving its European aspiration. When discussing their activity in Moldova diplomats emphasized their main focus – having stable neighbours. One big role that EU diplomatic actors played on the ground resulted from their donor activities. The empirical information collected in Moldova showed that there was an institutionalised form of interaction between the EU and national diplomatic actors in their role as donors that accounted for a communication infrastructure, where the EU Delegation played a central role. This role became more visible post-Lisbon, after the EU Delegation acquired legal recognition that upgraded the former Commission representation to full-blown EU delegations, an integral part of the EEAS that has been tasked to represent the Union. This task, as evidence has revealed, was embraced by both the Delegation and the MS embassies.

The way the EU and national diplomats engaged in these meetings is related to the discussion regarding the second criterion, relevance. Post-Lisbon developments focused firstly on the Union Delegations representing the Union, but the Treaty also prescribed that in third countries, the EU Delegation should step up its cooperation with the member-state embassies toward formulating and implementing a common approach (art. 32). Relevance as a criterion assessed corporate diplomatic practices as operationalised in Chapter 3. In Chisinau, the common approach referred to a common message or a common position vis-à-vis the local authorities. In practice, what was happening as result of cooperation between member-states and EU diplomats was joint action. Throughout 2010-2015 there were already several positive examples that supported such a direction of diplomatic activity: for instance Germany and Sweden scaled up their assistance. Nonetheless, there was also a

duality in the nature of the diplomatic practice in Moldova: the approach, interest and political weight of member-states was different, and this became visible when member-states promoted some people or their own interests. What became evident is that diplomatic actors had different tactics or reasons for promoting coordination. Some embassies, like Germany for instance, did not favour multilateral cooperation and preferred a bilateral approach; and the same held true for Poland, with its “go-it-alone” tactics, who preferred to pursue a parallel national agenda. Others, like Romania, have been criticised for having double standards: they feel comfortable pushing for their own interests based on their affinity to the country and, in some cases, leaking EU information to the Moldovan counterpart which, in turn, diminishes its credibility as an EU partner for cooperation.

From the data presented, it became obvious that formulating and implementing a common approach took place under the framework of the communication infrastructure presented in Table 12 (section 4.2.2.) – it became a major resource for the diplomatic community in Chisinau. Hence, in its final section, this chapter examined the EU’s diplomatic capabilities on the ground: the communication infrastructure as well as other political and social capital. The Delegation became stronger in maintaining the communication infrastructure as an information channel for all the members in the diplomatic community and provided the European general line without dictating policy to MS embraces; hence, becoming an information node. Yet, evidence also showed that the interaction among EU diplomatic actors resulted in different interest constellations such as the Nordic Plus or the Visegrad. The reasons for clustering were not directly disclosed by the interviewees, yet some pointed out a criticism related to the content of these meetings as being aid-driven. Indeed, an analysis of the work carried out by the Delegation presented in Figure 4 showed that according to interviewees, only approximately 10 per cent of the work related to the main functions of traditional diplomacy whereas approximately 50 per cent of activity (the Commission legacy) was operational activities or what can be coined as sectoral diplomacy tasks, such as project management. While there was a certain degree of path-dependency in this sense, the Delegation grew in size and acquired diplomatic personnel that moved from rather technical implementation to political activism and engagement with local stakeholders. Nonetheless, the biggest

team within the Delegation remained the Operations section that was responsible for aid-driven diplomacy.

It seems that in the period studied, there were, almost simultaneously, positive developments in Moldova, as result of the post-Lisbon changes, as well as challenges. The challenges were not necessarily new, but followed patterns already known regarding EU performance in general: such as inter-institutional tensions or member-states forming groups of interest constellations. A thorough discussion of these findings and what they mean for EU diplomatic performance is carried out in Chapter 7, after presenting the empirical evidence on Ukraine and Belarus in the following chapters.

Chapter 5. EU diplomatic performance in Ukraine

The relationship between Ukraine and the EU has followed a similar path to the one of Moldova and the EU described in Chapter 4. Ukraine, just like Moldova, gained its independence in 1991 and initially remained oriented towards the East *inter alia* because the bulk of its economic transactions that continued to take place with the East, especially Russia, who was also the main supplier of energy (gas, electricity, coal and oil products). The EU itself did not show a great interest in Ukraine: EU membership or enhanced relations as those proposed to the CEE countries were not on its agenda at the time. In the first half of the 90s, the EU still saw Ukraine as part of the Russian security community and welcomed its accession to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Initially, the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) concluded between the European Community and the USSR in 1989 provided a temporary framework for relations. The negotiations of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) in 1993 brought about the institutionalisation of the Ukraine-EU relationship. The intensification of relations and a fundamental change in Ukraine-EU relations happened, as in the Moldovan case, with the launch of the ENP and the signing of the Ukraine-EU Action Plan (AP) in 2005. The AP contained a list of comprehensive reforms that Ukraine was expected to implement in line with the EU *acquis*. The EaP further strengthened and diversified the relations that lead to the signing, in June 2014, of the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement.

In Kiev, the European Commission opened its Delegation as early as September 1993. Its mandate included, *inter alia*, the promotion of political and economic relations between the EU and Ukraine by maintaining relations with the government of Ukraine and its institutions, the monitoring of the progress of PCA implementation and participation in the implementation of the EU's assistance projects, such as TACIS. It was also mandated till 2005 to monitor the implementation of the PCA in Moldova and to oversee TACIS implementation and the work done by the TACIS Office in Chisinau. It also was the liaison office for cooperation with Belarus (till 2008). With the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, the Delegation of the

Commission was transformed into the Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine, with the status of a diplomatic mission, and started to officially represent the EU.

The discussion of the diplomatic performance of the EU in Ukraine is presented in this chapter in the same structural logic as the previous one. The chapter starts with a brief outline of EU-Ukraine relations and subsequently presents the empirical evidence gathered according to the three established criteria in the analytical framework (Chapter 3): effectiveness, relevance and capability. The second and third sections of this chapter discuss effectiveness on two levels, one that explores the degree of democratic governance in Ukraine and the other that investigates the diplomatic practices of representing the EU in Ukraine. Data on relevance is presented in the fourth section, which evaluates how the Union Delegation and member-state embassies in Ukraine cooperate towards formulating a common approach. Finally, evidence in relation to the EU's diplomatic resources and instruments on the ground is presented in the fifth section, under capabilities. In conclusion, the chapter summarises the empirical evidence presented based on the field-work conducted in Ukraine as well as based on the study of secondary sources (such as policy analysis, progress reports, legislation as well as academic findings from scholarly literature on Ukraine and the EU) without discussing the application of the three criteria, which will be done in Chapter 7.

5.1. Background of EU-Ukraine relations

This section provides a brief historical overview of the development of Ukraine - EU relations, the institutionalisation of this relationship under the PCA, the ENP and EaP respectively and the development of the diplomatic representations of the EU and of member-states.

5.1.1. From PCA to ENP

Ukraine expressed its interest in the European Union soon after its independence; this was a foreign policy choice that would open new prospects for cooperation with developed countries and bring modernization and socio-economic development (Kuzmin & Maksymenko, 2012). And even though the EU conditioned the negotiations of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) on Ukraine

obtaining a nuclear-free status³⁶, Ukraine was the first one to sign a PCA in June 1994. The PCA provided a framework for political dialogue between the parties that also established the path for economic and trade cooperation (PCA Ukraine, 1994). Already in 1996 Ukraine declared that EU membership was one of its strategic objectives and in 1998 president Kuchma signed a 'Strategy on Ukraine's Integration with the European Union', which formally proclaimed membership of the EU as Ukraine's long-term strategic goal (Wolczuk, 2003). The PCA replaced the 1989 agreement regulating trade with the Soviet Union and was the first form of institutionalisation of political relations with Ukraine (and also Moldova, as discussed in Chapter 4) without offering the prospect of EU membership. The main instrument under the PCA was TACIS (EU technical assistance to the CIS), administered by the European Commission, that aimed at helping the transformation of Ukrainian society and economy. Through this instrument the EU became the largest provider of external assistance to countries like Ukraine and Moldova (Zagorski, 2002). The PCA and as of 2004 the ENP defined a new model for the relations between EU and Ukraine: one of good neighbourly relations, where the Union would assist its weaker partner by supporting democratic and good governance reforms, among other measures, laid down within the EU-Ukraine Action Plan (AP).

Despite the fact that the EU became the largest international donor to Ukraine, instruments such as the PCA were not conducive to systematic change; and until the ENP, EU-Ukraine relations have been described as declaratory (Korosteleva, 2012; Wolczuk, 2003). With the ENP came the Action Plan that represented an agenda of political and economic reforms with short and medium-term priorities (Commission, 2004). The AP priorities targeted reforms in such areas as political dialogue, justice and home affairs and people to people contacts³⁷. Through the ENP, the EU expected Ukraine to reform in line with the EU *acquis* based on the implementation of the AP, a non-legally binding document, with the main burden carried out by the neighbour country. This implied that Ukraine was formally required to adopt the

³⁶ A nuclear-free status implied closing the Chernobyl AES, providing security measures of the new reactors and signing an Agreement between USA, Russia and Ukraine regarding the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from Ukraine. Trilateral Statement and accompanying annex, signed by Kravchuk, Yelstin and U.S. President Bill Clinton in Moscow on January 14, 1994 (Pifer, 2011; Kuzmin & Maksymenko, 2012)

³⁷ Some examples of AP chapters are: (I) Political dialogue and reform: democracy and the rule of law; human rights and fundamental freedoms; cooperation on foreign and security policy, conflict prevention and crisis management; regional cooperation; (II) cooperation in Justice and Home Affairs: migration issues; border management; fight against organised crime; drugs; money laundering financial and economic crime; police and judicial cooperation; (III) People-to-people contacts: civil society cooperation; cross-border and regional level cooperation.

acquis. In this sense, there was a large similarity with the process the candidate countries had to go through but without the prospect of membership; which came as a disappointment for Ukraine which had declared its membership aspirations. As a result of negotiations of the AP, Ukrainian authorities accepted the ENP as a temporary framework for relations – a pre-candidate phase for Ukraine (Wolczuk, 2009). This institutionalization of relations led to the creation of the post of Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration, a European Integration Department within the Cabinet of Ministers, a State Department for Legal Approximation and the 2004 constitutional changes that gave the Ukrainian Parliament new legislative opportunities in the process of European integration. Ukrainian politicians embraced the ENP-reform agenda as their ambition was to be referred to as an associate or a full-fledged member in the EU's strategies towards Ukraine (Kopiyka & Shynkarenko, 2001).

Through the ENP, the European Commission proposed to move beyond mere cooperation to a significant degree of economic integration in return for concrete progress in terms of legal approximation, detailed in the AP, adopted for three years. In March 2007, Ukraine was the first ENP country to start negotiations on a new Association Agreement (AA) as part of a general revision of the bilateral legal framework. Negotiations on a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) were only launched in February 2008 after Ukraine's accession to the WTO. A political agreement was reached in December 2011 and the AA was initialled in March 2012. During these negotiations and before the entry into force of the AA, the democratic reforms conducted in Ukraine followed the 2009 EU-Ukraine Association Agenda, the official policy document which replaced the original ENP Ukraine Action Plan.

5.1.2. From ENP to EaP and the Association Agreement

The EaP further institutionalised political cooperation between the EU and Ukraine, in particular through the conclusion of the new AA. The AA was a new generation of agreements that came to replace the outdated PCA. The AA acknowledged Ukraine as a European country that shared common history and values with the MS (Association Agreement, 2014) and it was with Ukraine that the DCFTA was first

codified in an AA³⁸. The shadow of the membership perspective has been one persistent feature of the Ukraine-EU relations: Ukrainian politicians often doubted the EU's commitment to democratic values, arguing instead that the EU should be concerned more with its economic interests (Shumylo-Tapiola, 2012). Days before the Vilnius summit (November 2013), Ukraine announced that it would not sign the AA (which was initialled in March 2012) in order "to ensure the national security of Ukraine and to recover trade and economic relations with the Russian Federation" (Government of Ukraine, 2013) which resulted in a complex civil and political turmoil within the country³⁹. And while some scholars emphasized that the 'taproot of trouble' regarding the crisis in Ukraine is the NATO military enlargement coupled with EU's expansion Eastward and the back-up of the Orange revolution in 2004 by the Western powers (Mearsheimer, 2014); others highlighted that these events are not about Russia, NATO or realpolitik but rather about a President like Putin and his 'unconstrained, erratic adventurism' in politics (McFaul, 2014). The causes and nature of the turbulent developments in Ukraine are discussed by more recent literature that distinguishes between four main factors: (1) institutional and political instability in Ukraine that allowed oligarchic structures to challenge state authority; (2) division within society between preference toward Eastern (Russia) and respectively Western (EU) orientation; (3) Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in March 2014; (4) Russia's support of the separatist movements that lead to warfare in the Eastern regions of Donbas and Lugansk in the spring of 2014 (Bátora & Navrátil, 2016). The turmoil led to the dismissal of President Victor Yanukovich in February 2014 and the establishment of an Interim-Government under the leadership of Arseniy Yatsenyuk; a government which had as short-term objective the signing of the AA. In March 2014, the Ukrainian government provisionally signed the AA after intense negotiations and frequent visits by top EU officials and foreign ministers of EU member states. The final signature by the newly elected President Petro Poroshenko of the entire agreement happened in June 2014, after which the ratification procedure for the entire agreement could be initiated. This is not to say that the crisis is over, but, as a scholar recommended, "the best way to avoid an

³⁸ In comparison, after negotiations concluded with Ukraine in November 2011, the European Commission authorized to open negotiations with Moldova in March 2012.

³⁹ This thesis acknowledges the events that shattered Ukraine in 2013-2014 but does not conduct a thorough analysis of the crisis per se, which is outside the scope of the thesis. The empirical evidence presented in this chapter in sections 5.4. and 5.5., however, brings forward details of the EUD and MS actions during the crisis in discussing the common approach and diplomatic capabilities in Ukraine specifically.

escalation of radical political confrontation inside Ukraine is not to resolve the big geopolitical questions but to defer them” (Sestanovich, 2014, p. 174); which seems to be the current pace of the EU-Ukraine relationship.

The AA is a comprehensive document both in terms of scope and level of detail, counting circa 2,140 pages, with 46 annexes, 3 protocols and a joint declaration published in the Official Journal (Association Agreement, 2014). As is the case of the Moldovan AA, the DCFTA is part of the AA and sets the level of ambition of this relationship as high as Ukraine’s gradual integration into the EU internal market (Association Agreement, 2014, art. 1). The detailed AA provisions imply alignment of Ukrainian laws and policies with the *acquis* in the field of common foreign and security policy as well as in the area of freedom, security and justice (FSJ). And additionally, it requires extensive legislative and regulatory approximation including sophisticated mechanisms to secure the uniform interpretation and effective implementation of relevant EU legislation in the area of trade. The relationship is dependent, as in the case of Moldova, on the progress of implementation of the reforms that stem from the AA and the level of convergence with the EU achieved in political, economic and legal areas. Consequently, Ukraine became involved in a high degree of legislation harmonization and had to show commitment to reforms resulting from initialising the AA.

5.1.3. EU and MS diplomatic representations

In Ukraine during the period under study there was the largest European diplomatic community in Eastern Europe: the EU Delegation and most member states had diplomatic representation in Kiev with the exception of Ireland, Luxembourg and Malta, as could be seen in Table 5 from Chapter 2 (section 2.2.2.). There were 24 national embassies out of a total of 77 diplomatic representations accounted for by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine (and the EU Delegation) as presented in Table 14 below.

Table 14. National and EU diplomatic missions in Ukraine, 2015⁴⁰

Embassy/Delegation		No. of diplomatic staff ⁴¹	Size
EU member-state embassies	Austria	n/a*	small*
	Belgium	5	small
	Bulgaria	14	large
	Cyprus	3	small
	Czech Republic	11	large
	Denmark	3**	small
	Estonia	9	medium
	Finland	8	medium
	France	6	small
	Germany	n/a***	large
	Greece	n/a	n/a
	Hungary	14	large
	Italy	8	medium
	Latvia	6	small
	Lithuania	10	large
	Netherlands, the	8	medium
	Poland	9****	large****
	Portugal	2	small
	Romania	13	large
	Slovakia	12	large
Slovenia	6	small	
Spain	6	small	
Sweden	12	large	
United Kingdom*****	n/a	n/a	
EU	EU	12*****	large
Total	25	--	--
<p><i>Notes:</i></p> <p>*no data about the diplomatic staff is disclosed on the website, the interviewee referred to their embassy as a small one in terms of their diplomatic staff in 2015 (interv. 44)</p> <p>**data based on the interview conducted in 2016 on information about the embassy in 2015, no data is disclosed on the website (interv. 46)</p> <p>***the website of the German embassy indicates that there were 62 Germans working at the embassy, without an indication how many were diplomats accredited with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine</p> <p>****data based on the Polish website from 2013; information was not disclosed at a later stage; the interviewee referred to their embassy as a large one in terms of their diplomatic staff (interv. 21)</p> <p>*****no data was disclosed on the embassy's website or during the interviews</p> <p>*****this data accounts only for the HoD and the Heads of all the sections within the Delegation and does not include the political officers or the managers within the different sections; for the total number of staff within the Delegation see Table 21</p>			
<p><i>Source:</i> Data compiled by the author in 2013 and updated in 2015 based on the website of the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the webpages of national embassies</p>			

⁴⁰ The numbers shown here are estimates and reflect data collected on the ground during interviews and based on the data shown on their websites in 2011, 2013 and 2016 when the author spent her field-work time in Kiev

⁴¹ In this table the number of diplomatic staff reflects solely the national diplomats accredited in the host-country and does not reflect the total number of employees of the embassy or delegation.

While data in the table above indicates a number of 12 people in the EU Delegation in Kiev, it only refers to the data shown on the Delegation’s website in 2013 and 2015 and accounts for the Head of the Delegation and the heads of the sections within the Delegation and does not include the political officers or managers for example. The interviews conducted in the Kiev Delegation revealed that the Union Delegation had the largest number of personnel accredited in Ukraine (interv. 16 and 20). A former Austrian diplomat explained that there were two factors that determined the size of a Delegation: the political importance of the relationship and the level of EU assistance to a given country: “which plays an even greater role” (Lehne, 2015, n.p.). Ukraine was among the countries who were large aid recipients (see data in Table 17 below) and the EU’s Delegation in Kiev was about as large as the ones in China, Russia, and the United States; the largest EU Delegation is the one in Turkey with 140 staff members (ibidem). As Table 15 below shows, there was a total of 102 people working in the Delegation in 2015, with most of the personnel coming from the European Commission.

Table 15. Distribution of EEAS and Commission staff in the EU Delegation in Ukraine, 2015			
EU Delegation in Kiev	Staff		
	Commission	EEAS	Total
	74	28	102

Source: Data withdrawn from Bicchi & Maurer (2018), Table 2, page 16 (staff numbers have been provided to the authors by EEAS staff in March, 2016)

The Delegation of the European Commission to Ukraine was opened in Kiev in 1993 and had the status of a diplomatic mission and officially represented the European Commission. In the first 10 years of its existence, the Delegation grew from having 6 staff members, working from hotel rooms in the National Hotel in Kiev to 75 people of 14 different nationalities in 2006 (Delegation, 2007a). It also increased its status from managing projects such as TACIS to becoming the largest donor, counting the implementation of 1000 EU-funded projects in Ukraine worth circa €1,2 billion (ibidem). As part of the ENP, the EU increased its support to a wide range of capacity-building activities aimed at strengthening civil society as well as holding dialogues with non-state actors on a wide range of issues including democratisation,

respect for human rights and freedom of expression, women's rights, education and the environment (Delegation, 2007b). EU financial support also focused on trade and trade-related issues, on approximation of legislation to EU standards, on judicial reform; on energy and the environment. After TACIS, as in the case of Moldova, financial assistance in the form of grants to help Ukraine implement the Action Plan was provided mainly by means of the ENPI: € 964 million was allocated between 2007 and 2013. The data presented in Table 16 shows the support provided by the EU according to its planning based on the Country Strategy Paper (CSP) and two national indicative programmes (2007-2010 and 2011-2013). Based on the developments in Ukraine in 2014 that led to a political crisis and civil unrest, no new CSP or NIP was announced, yet, the Commission approved a €365 million "Special Measure" (in grants) for 2014, the highest annual amount ever committed for Ukraine (Commission, 2015d).

Table 16: EU financial aid to Ukraine 1991-2014 (indicative amounts)	
	Total amount (million euro)
TACIS (1991–2001)	1,072 (billion euro)
TACIS (2002-2006)	212
ENPI (2007–2010)	494
ENPI (2011–2013)	470
ENI (for 2014 only)*	365 ("Special Measure")
Note: *since the turmoil in Ukraine, the EU has not announced an indicative plan for the following period within the ENI	
Source: authors' compilation of data from NIP Ukraine (2004–2006), CSP Ukraine 2002-2006; 2007-2010 and 2011-2013 and the Court of Auditors Special Report on EU assistance to Ukraine, 2016 (NIP Ukraine 2004–2006; Court of Auditors, 2016)	

Besides project management and donor activities conducted by the Commission representation, it considered public relations of importance and was involved in public diplomacy activities such as conducting press briefings for Ukrainian journalists to provide them with first-hand information about the mandate and the activities of the Delegation in Ukraine as well as about the EU's new European Neighbourhood Policy and the state of affairs in EU-Ukraine relations after the enlargement of the European Union (Delegation, 2007a). It also organised study visits to the EU institutions in Brussels in order to provide Ukrainian journalists with

first-hand information and impressions about the EU institutions and EU-Ukraine relations. Through events such as Europe Day or EU Information Bus tours, the Commission representation would spread information about the EU in general or about EU-Ukraine relations more specifically. Or it would also organise exhibitions that brought together both national and regional EU-funded projects representing cooperation in the spheres of agriculture, support and development of renewable sources of energy, strengthening regional social services, civil society development and others.

Field-work conducted in Ukraine allows us to observe that the diplomatic activities of national embassies in the period 2010-2015 were not limited to their main functions as embassies stipulated in the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (United Nations, 1961) such as representation, defending state interests, negotiation or information-sharing. On a daily basis embassies were engaged in trade, cultural or public diplomacy; in developing their political agendas, building bridges and creating partnerships, in negotiations with local authorities. Similar to observation made in Moldova (see Chapter 4, section 4.1.), national diplomats were also involved in providing development aid assistance, monitoring and evaluating the reform agenda conducted by the Ukrainian government. But such an activity was not uncommon for the Commission Delegation in Kiev. Generally speaking, judging from the fact that the Commission Delegation was mandated to monitor the progress of the PCA implementation and the participation in the implementation of the EU's assistance projects, its daily operations were about managing these technical and financial programmes (like TACIS) and monitoring progress of the cooperation agreements such as the PCA and later the AP. In addition to their technical-aid activity, they also took over some diplomatic tasks and competencies such as public diplomacy or becoming the base for all visiting high-level EU officials in Ukraine; these diplomatic dimension became stronger after the Lisbon Treaty and the switch to a fully-fledged Union Delegation in Kiev, discussed in section 5.3.

5.2. Effectiveness: sustainability of ENP goals

In this part of the chapter empirical evidence vis-à-vis the first criterion, effectiveness is presented. As operationalised in Chapter 3, effectiveness looks into goal

attainment and is assessed on two dimensions. Therefore, in the first section, an exploration of democratic governance in Ukraine is performed based on the level of adaptation to EU rules and norms. As the full application of the AA/DCFTA was set to start on January 1st, 2016, the degree of the level of adaptation to EU rules and norms presented in section 5.2. evaluates empirical evidence only up to 2015. The point of reference here is the ENP Action Plan with Ukraine and the EU-Ukraine Association Agenda. It was under the ENP that Ukraine embarked on a path of convergence to EU rules and norms and their adoption and application into its national system. Also, the activity of national embassies and the EU Delegation in this area is presented. In the second section, the Lisbon Treaty is the reference point in discussing effectiveness. The focus is to explore how the EU Delegation in Kiev embraced the representation function since the upgrade from Commission representation to a fully-fledged EU Delegation.

5.2.1. Level of adaptation/alignment to EU rules & norms

Monitoring reports outlined that under the ENP Ukraine was initially showing some progress in the area of institutional reform (Commission, 2009)⁴², but the pace of reforms was slow or even stagnated. The slow pace was due to, *inter alia*, the size of domestic costs, several challenges being – limited resources available, political crises, institutional underdevelopment and low administrative capacity (Commission, 2009; Baltag & Romanyshyn, 2011). As part of the EaP, Ukraine, alongside Moldova, was one of the top performers in terms of the country's approximation to EU rules and norms as can be seen in Table 17 below. Whereas Ukraine was the first out of the EaP countries to initial the AA, a number of reforms in the areas of the democracy and the rule of law still required more tangible results in comparison to Moldova, for example (EaP Index, 2014). The EU progress report from 2013 emphasized that Ukraine's rate of alignment had actually decreased (Commission 2014c) and its reform record was poor. Ukraine did not address most of the key reform areas and little progress was achieved in the area of migration, asylum, visa liberalisation, and justice reform (*ibidem*). With the leadership of Yanukovych, Ukraine entered a phase of 'rhetorical integration' (Solonenko, 2010); the Ukrainian

⁴² Ukraine showed positive record in conducting democratic elections in 2006 and 2007 as well as in the area of freedom of the media

leadership embraced anti-democratic trends and tightened its control over civil society, freedom of the media and of assembly; hence the state of civil unrest that emerged in Ukraine (interv. UKR 14, 15, 16).

Table 17. Approximation rate of EaP countries to the EU: Ukraine						
<i>*approximation indices (1=best performer; 0=worst performer)</i>						
Sector cooperation	Moldova	Georgia	Ukraine	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Belarus
Deep and sustainable democracy	0.76	0.73	0.61	0.61	0.29	0.27
Independent judiciary	0.83	0.88	0.47	0.73	0.27	0.24
Freedom, Security and Justice	0.99	0.90	0.86	0.64	0.60	0.42
Source: Author's compilation based on EaP Index 2014						

Ukraine signed various documents that regulated the relationship with the EU, which involved further harmonization of legislation, and revision of normative acts; every ministry adopted special EU-oriented strategies to incorporate EU norms and standards (interv. UKR 1, 4, 6, 9). In 2003, the Ukrainian Parliament adopted “The European choice. Conceptual principles of strategy of economic and social development of Ukraine 2002-2011”, Ukraine’s main document that aimed at integration into the EU. As early as 2004 Ukraine adopted its National Strategy on Integration to the European Community as a main framework that outlined Ukraine’s internal priorities in approximation to the EU and the strategy of economic and social development for 2004-2015 “In the way of European integration” embracing objectives such as institutional transformation and convergence to EU standards, implementation of socio-economic and political standards and hence, improving the quality of life of the population.

The pace of adaptation accelerated after 2014 with the newly elected President, Petro Poroshenko, after the political and civil turmoil and the newly formed government led by Evgenyi Yatsenyuk. Scholars noted that the public administration reform gained momentum in 2014 with the ‘State Building Contract’ that could potentially lead to development of more reliable and stronger structures for coordination of EU integration (Bátora & Navrátil, 2016). EU progress reports from 2016 emphasized that in 2015 Ukraine had carried out unprecedented reforms across a number of sectors of the economy and society, while its democratic

institutions had been further strengthened (Commission, 2016). Ukraine initiated a number of important legislative and institutional changes in the area of anti-corruption reforms: the National Anti-Corruption Bureau (NABU) - a new law-enforcement agency - started the first investigations of high-level corruption cases in December 2015, following the appointment of the Head of the Specialised Anti-Corruption Prosecution Office (SAPO); both being fully operational. Another example, of key importance for both, Ukraine and the EU, is the energy sector reform. Ukraine adopted a series of laws based on the stipulation in the AP and the Association Agenda, some dating back to 2008 and 2009. These transposed into national laws (list provided in Table 18), that aimed at bringing the gas sector legislation into full compliance with the rules of EU energy market, had a considerable dynamism since 2014 and the set of laws adopted in 2015 would improve the climate for investment in the Ukrainian energy market, as stated by Commissioner Štefčovič, in charge of Energy Union (Štefčovič 2015 as cited in Bátorá & Navrátil, 2016, p. 29).

Table 18. Legislative acts transposed on energy and energy efficiency in Ukraine 2008-2015	
<i>Energy sector</i>	<i>Legislative acts transposed</i>
Market of nuclear fuel and nuclear technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Law of Ukraine “About licensing activity in the field of nuclear energy use” from February 11, 2010 №1874-VI • The Law of Ukraine “About Amendments to the Law of Ukraine “About Nuclear Energy Use and Radiation Safety” about regarding supplementing nuclear installations on December 20, 2011 №4175-VI • The Law of Ukraine “About handling of spent nuclear fuel on location, design and construction of centralized storage facility for spent nuclear fuel on domestic nuclear power” on February 9, 2015 №4384-VI
Natural gas market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Law of Ukraine “About natural gas market” on July 8, 2010 №2467-VI • The Law of Ukraine “About natural gas market” on April 9, 2015 №329-VIII
Electricity market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Law of Ukraine “About principles of functioning Ukraine electricity market” dated October 24, 2013 №663-VII

<p>Market of alternative energy sources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Law of Ukraine “About Amendments to Some Laws of Ukraine on the establishment of “green tariff” of 25 September 2008 №601- VI • The Law of Ukraine “About amending some laws of Ukraine to promote the production and use of bio-fuels”: from May 21, 2009 №1391-VI • The Law of Ukraine “About Amendments to the Law of Ukraine “About Electric Power Industry to stimulate the production of electricity from alternative energy sources” from December 20, 2012 №5485-VI • The Law of Ukraine “About amending some laws of Ukraine to ensure competitive conditions of electricity from alternative energy sources” from June 04, 2015 №514-VIII
<p><i>Source:</i> author’s compilation based on the websites of the NGO “Municipal Energy” and the website of the Parliament of Ukraine (Verhovna Rada of Ukraine)</p>	

Ukraine actively cooperated with different EU agencies and programmes: it was also active within the CS Forum, the EU’s platform for EaP civil society cooperation where it discussed common approaches on different democracy and good governance initiatives, including human rights and where, alongside its Moldovan counterpart, Ukrainian civil society was active in proposing policy initiatives. It showed activism within European programmes, as stipulated in the AP and the Association Agenda, such as Tempus and the 7th Research Framework Programme (FP7) and participated in different cross-border cooperation programmes such as the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine (2007-2013) or Hungary Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine one (2007-2013). Additionally, there was strong bilateral cooperation with EU member-states and other international bodies such as UNDP or the Council of Europe in the field of good governance and the rule of law.

As result of several institutional reforms, Ukrainian public institutions had, to a certain degree, restructured: the line ministries created departments that either directly worked on the EU such as the Directorate general for the European Union within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as in the Presidential Administration or the Parliament; these directorates were given extra prerogatives on cooperation with the EU⁴³. Institutionally, Ukraine enjoyed the highest intensity of political dialogue and

⁴³ As early as 1993, an Interdepartmental Committee on European Communities matters has been created within the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers, followed in 1998, by an EU-Ukraine Cooperation Council headed by the Ukrainian Prime minister. This lead to the creation of departments of cooperation with the EU in public institutions (sub-committees or working groups) as well as a Committee of Parliamentary cooperation and a National Agency on Development and European Integration. In 2003 the

sectoral cooperation with the EU despite receiving less funding per capita (EaP Index 2013, pp. 44-45). From 1997, high-level political meetings such as the Ukraine-EU Summits were held annually; since 1998 regular meetings of the EU-Ukraine Cooperation Council as well as the EU-Ukraine Cooperation Committee with its relevant sub-committees took place. In addition twice-yearly meetings of the foreign ministers, of political directors and the COEST group were held (Mission of Ukraine to the EU, 2012).

Intensive cooperation patterns emerged also in the field of security: besides a high degree of consultations and meetings⁴⁴, Ukraine proposed participation in peacekeeping operations, offering the EU the use of its military aircraft and of the country's potential in the EU Tactical Battle Groups and as of 2011, it was the only NATO-partner country to have participated in all NATO peacekeeping operations⁴⁵ (Badrak, 2016). Ukraine aligned with 23 out of 62 EU CFSP declarations (Commission 2012b, p. 8); there were regular EU-Ukraine consultations on crisis management, including further implementation of the "Seville" Arrangements for Consultation and Co-operation between the EU and Ukraine in EU-led crisis management operations. The legal framework was also in place: Ukraine adopted the Arrangements for Consultation and Cooperation between the European Union and Ukraine on Crises Management, complemented by Agreement between the European Union and Ukraine on Security Procedures for the Exchange of Classified Information and Agreement between the European Union and Ukraine Establishing a Framework for the Participation of Ukraine in European Union Crisis Management Operations (Badrak, 2016).

Public institutions approved new normative documents and internal rules which aimed at outlining the direction of adaptation to key EU standards (interv. UKR 1, 6, 9, 13). This, in turn, allowed Ukraine to participate in a wide range of EU projects⁴⁶. Already in 2013 the Center for the Adaptation of Civil Service to the standards of the

State Council for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration was created and tasked to coordinate its economic, political, security and legislative integration into Euro-Atlantic structures.

⁴⁴ Twice a year meetings at the level of Working Group for global disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control (CONOP/CODUN) and Working Group for conventional arms (COARM) take place (Mission of Ukraine to the EU, 2012)

⁴⁵ Ukraine participates in the following operations: *Kosovo* (Kosovo International Security Force – KFOR), *Afghanistan* (International Security Assistance Force in Islamic Republic of Afghanistan – ISAF), *Iraq* (NATO Training Mission– NTM-I) and *Mediterranean* (NATO Antiterrorist Operation *Active Endeavour*), (Badrak 2016).

⁴⁶ At present moment the Center for the Adaptation of Civil Service to the standards of the EU counts 66 Twinning projects developed; the Center also indicates that central and regional authorities as well as social organizations from Ukraine are recipients of TAIEX assistance, as well as a beneficiary of the CIB, comprehensive institution building mechanism in sum of at least EUR 43,37 mil., all EU programs (Center 2013).

EU counted 66 developed Twinning projects, as well as a beneficiary of the CIB, the comprehensive institution building mechanism in sum of at least EUR 43,37 mil.(Center 2013). The Center also indicated that central and regional authorities as well as social organizations from Ukraine had become recipients of TAIEX assistance - a EU technical assistance programme that supported public administrations with regard to the approximation, application and enforcement of EU legislation. However, empirical evidence also showed that Ukraine had not left behind its (formal) institutional Soviet heritage; the changes in favour of European norms rather represented window-dressing: “we do technical paperwork like translations or preparing for trips and conferences instead of implementing the EU-reform agenda (...) as civil servants we are obliged to follow (other) directives of the Ukrainian government” (interv. UKR 11). Enjoying growing political ties with the EU did not change Ukrainian domestic patterns in favour of EU norms: “ministries are the same as they used to be, it is a very Soviet style bureaucracy when we compare it with European procedures or standards” (interv. UKR 10).

While in Moldova it seemed that the EU-driven reforms, through participation and socialization within different programs and projects had positive effects, in the case of Ukraine the same effects did not occur. Ukrainian institutions and political elites remained locked in a phenomenon called by researchers ‘*post-Sovietness*’ (IWP, 2012). The average age of the cabinet was 53 years, similar to the Moldovan one during the communist regime⁴⁷; which implied that most of their adult lives, the politicians and civil servants existed under decomposing socialism and their value system was formed under USSR education. As the IWP study explained, this Ukrainian elite is characterized by practices of legalization of shadow capital, money laundering and converting power and connections into a capital (IWP, 2012, p. 12). This came in sync with the low degree of Europeanization of Ukrainian institutions as well as the low degree of willingness to converge to European reforms.

In contrast to the above, Ukrainian civil society became a driving force of EU reforms in the country, opposing the decision of President Yanukovich in 2014 not to sign the AA: “today it is only the people of Ukraine who stand ready to sacrifice their lives for European rights and freedoms” (Journalist, 2014). According to civil society

⁴⁷Between 2001 and 2009, under the Presidency of V. Voronin, the average age of the Moldovan parliamentary elite was 55 years and of the government one was 53.

representatives, Ukrainian citizens in Kiev, Lvov or Odessa were struggling for the future of their country – one that would be European-style, based on the rule of law or one which would be Russian-style, based on rule of the oligarchy and a shadow economy (interv. UKR 14, 15, 16). The conservation of a post-Soviet social system in Ukraine and the anti-democratic way of governing, the state's inability to perform in areas such as protection of human rights and basic freedom and its shift towards Russia in November 2013 through not signing of the AA deepened the growing distrust felt in civil society (interv. UKR 3, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16). At the same time, Ukrainian civil society questioned the EU's commitment to fostering democracy in Ukraine or a real advancement in their relations: they were dissatisfied with the low level of the information campaign undertaken by the EU Delegation in Ukraine in relation to the AA, and its slow reaction to the violent actions by the Yanukovich government against the protestors (interv. UKR 3, 10, 11). They also doubted EU instruments such as TAIEX or TWINNING as their experts did not foster pro-EU change: "they mainly come and go with their knowledge, do not provide continuity but mainly jobs for EU citizens" (interv. UKR 10). As a Ukrainian official explained: "the EU reform-agenda is very large and difficult to comply with, the financial capacity does not allow us to implement what is given, thus I and my other colleagues are against this association agenda as it is costly: additional work, not enough people or resources to facilitate its implementation" (interv. UKR 4).

5.2.2. The role of diplomatic actors in Kiev

The activity of the diplomatic community in Ukraine between 2010-2015 revolved around Ukraine's agenda for integration to the EU. Diplomats' major tasks were related to political developments in relation to the progress and the reform agenda of Ukraine and they developed instruments to support democratization, good governance and the rule of law, and the human rights reforms (interv. 18). Their activities in Ukraine focused on bilateral relations that happened within the broader EU context, as one Polish diplomat explained (interv. 21) and as one Swedish diplomat emphasized: "I deal with political affairs and political reporting, with establishing of our agenda and networking and negotiation with the ministries on bilateral interests as well as on EU agenda" (interv. 22). This was also visible in public diplomacy activities as they engaged with the Ukrainian mass media or

universities and held discussions on EU integration (*ibidem*), or directly supported projects and events that related to the Ukrainian reform agenda; for example the Belgian embassy supported the activities of the Ukrainian-Belgian Centre for Environment and Human Health which conducted research for a variety of projects that study the soil, Carpathian plants, Carpathian water sources and other environment related projects (interv. 43). Austria had been working on increasing financial support in Ukraine, even though it was not a target country in their development cooperation strategy. They had channelled their effort to supporting both Ukraine and the EUD on projects aimed at fighting corruption, vocational education training and rural development as well as in agriculture and agriculture-related projects (interv. 44).

National diplomats found different means to align their efforts with Ukraine's processes of implementing reforms under the AA and achieving its European aspirations. As members of the EU, Swedish diplomats promoted the benefits of the AA and tried to push the Ukrainian authorities towards signing the Association agreement: "For Sweden, common values are very important, at the end of the day it is Ukraine's choice, it is a societal choice, and if they want to sign then they need to show that they share these common values and we are not ready to take the geopolitical point of view, we want them to show some tangible progress in the areas of the AA. We are considered as hardliners, when it comes to common values of course, but we are also most ardent supporters of Ukraine and its integration in the EU and we think that we need to stand firm on our values." (interv. 22). Germany's priority in Ukraine was also strong on implementation of reforms by Ukraine and their activities involved, *inter alia*, working on projects in their interest areas such as energy efficiency, anti-corruption and protection of journalists (interv. 47). Smaller embassies, like the Belgian one, for example, focused on public diplomacy activities in Ukraine and considered building contacts between institutions in Belgium (both national and EU) and Ukraine important: "We facilitate the Ukrainian stakeholders and relevant actors to participate in workshops in Belgium and interact with Belgian industries for example. This also comes as an effect of implementation of European reforms. We find it important for the Ukrainian side goes to Brussels where all Belgian and EU institutions are and to put them in touch – to learn, for instance, from the Belgian counterparts how they implemented reforms" (interv. 43).

Data collected from the fieldwork conducted in Ukraine (2013-2016) showed that, operationally, there was no difference between the practices of national or EU diplomacy in their focus of activities in Ukraine. As one Polish diplomat argued: “[The] EU represents the interests of all its MS as a block. Every MS has its own interests which are not covered by the EU and hence bilateral relations are different from one country to another, but EU diplomacy, in turn, is the common denominator in relations with Ukraine.” (interv. 21). National diplomats reiterated during interviews that the reforms in Ukraine were a big part of their diplomatic agenda and that it was also the EU prerogative to promote this agenda. National diplomats became like-minded on the question of reforms that Ukraine had to undertake and as result, echoed the EU messages to Ukraine, which they coordinated among themselves (interv. 22, 24, 42, 44, 45). Their daily activity involved monitoring closely developments in Ukraine such as visa-liberalisation actions and the ratification of the AA and providing support that would get Ukraine closer to the EU standards (interv. 42).

An Austrian diplomat highlighted the fact that “Austria cannot influence the political discourse in Ukraine without the EUD as our diplomacy is focusing on bilateral affairs and growing the network of contacts and then on conveying the common EU approach as we understand it. The EU Delegation, on the other hand, does not have to focus energy on bilateral diplomacy and only focus on the EU agenda” (interv. 44). Therefore the premises of EU diplomacy conducted by the EUD were seen as more global and acting from the standpoint of European integration (interv. 45). The intention of EU diplomatic activity in Ukraine, as was stated by EU diplomats in the Delegation was “to have closer relations with Ukraine via the offer of the AA and Ukraine is one of the most important neighbours from its Eastern partners” (interv. 23). The diplomat further explained that since Ukraine showed interest in having closer cooperation with the EU and completed the negotiations with the WTO in order to open negotiations on DCFTA, this implied that the EUD’s diplomatic task was to work closely with authorities, on a daily basis, and to support Ukraine to deliver on the benchmarks and to fulfil them. For the EUD, this meant being constantly in touch with the Ukrainian MFA and other ministries representing the government, but also sharing information on the EU, such as explaining the AA and the DCFTA (interv. 16).

During the period under study, the EU became the largest donor of development assistance to Ukraine (see data in Table 16) and this implied diplomatic work centred on heavy monitoring of the progress made by Ukraine and how the practical measures had been adopted (interv. 19). In the case of Ukraine, the EU offered a framework for political association and economic integration within the AA, which was a political commitment to come closer to the EU and was reflected in EU financial assistance in form of grants and loans as Table 19 below shows.

Table 19. EU financial assistance offered to Ukraine 2007-2015

	Total allocations ¹	
	Amount	Share
Overall EU assistance to Ukraine (including MFA)	5 019	100 %
Total grants	1 609	32 %
ENPI/ENI ²	1 330	27 %
of which		
Budget support ^{3,4}	794	16 %
Other ENPI/ENI grants	536	11 %
Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace	54	1 %
Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation	225	4 %
Total macro-financial assistance (MFA) loans	3 410	68 %
MFA I	610	12 %
MFA II	1 000	20 %
MFA III	1 800	36 %

Source: European Court of Auditors (2016). EU assistance to Ukraine, Special Report no 32, p. 11, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

Hence the Delegation in Kiev was preoccupied with ongoing issues in the country and followed closely all developments and progress made on reforms. A screening of Ukraine's progress on implementation of reforms was conducted by the EUD staff on a daily basis; both the negative and positive aspects of the developments in Ukraine were then transformed by the EUD into specific and detailed reports sent to Brussels. In response to the crisis in Ukraine, EU set up, in April 2014, The Support Group for Ukraine⁴⁸ which drew on the work done by the Delegation on the ground and its experience in supporting reforms in Ukraine. It was established by the European Commission to ensure that the support provided was focused and concentrated on the Association Agenda as well as providing additional strategic

⁴⁸ The activity report for 18 months can be read here: <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/neighbourhood/pdf/key-documents/ukraine/20161028-report-squa.pdf>

direction to already existing in country day-to-day donor coordination. The work of the Support Group was channelled on the ground via the Delegation: by providing advice directly; by bringing in experts from other European Commission services; by deploying experts provided by the Member States; and by bringing to bear the substantial grant assistance made available by the European Commission. Two of the four main conclusions of the Activity report of the Support group referred to further strengthening coordination and creating synergies with the member-states on ongoing assistance and its programming, with the aim of increasing the overall impact of EU action (Commission, 2016b).

Similar to the case of Moldova, in Ukraine, the diplomatic interaction was highly diverse and diplomacy as a result expanded beyond representation, communication or negotiation as presented in Chapter 2 (sections 2.2.1.). Besides their traditional diplomatic role, national embassies and the EU delegations became very active in their roles as donors and developed a strong relationship with civil society organisations, not just the governments. Through their activity as donors, diplomatic actors invested in strengthening reforms and fostering democratic developments in Ukraine. In contrast to work undertaken by national embassies, these activities, which were rather technical in nature, came in a more natural manner to the EUD, who took over the former Commission representation portfolio which was mainly managing EU assistance. Therefore, given the increasing financial assistance that the EU offered to Ukraine (see Table 16, 19), the Delegation was overseeing projects carried out across a wide range of sectors, regions and cities in Ukraine on support for democratic development and good governance, regulatory reform and administrative capacity building, infrastructure development and other areas (interv. 16, 19, 20, 48).

Besides contributing to the general EU budget from which the EU provided assistance to Ukraine (data presented in Table 16 and 19), member states also developed bilateral strategies and instruments for providing development assistance. Denmark, which had one of the smallest embassies in Ukraine, offered support through the Neighbourhood Programme, which was centred on development aid assistance to EE neighbours in the East and South-East; and Ukraine was one of the priority countries. The objective of the program was to promote open democratic

justice based on stable political and economic development in neighbouring countries, and the embassy contributed to different projects in the area of legal reforms, capacity building of companies in the agricultural sector as well as support during the crisis on human rights issues, constitutional reform and others. For the 2013-2017 programme, Denmark allocated a total sum of 1 billion DKK (the programme includes 14 countries) which is approximately €1.3 million (Embassy DK, 2015). The activities of the medium-sized Dutch embassy, focused, in this sense, on capacity-building and strengthening of the civil-society and governments in ENP countries through the MATRA programme. In Ukraine, this programme was implemented in order to support the transition and reform processes towards a pluriform democracy with distinct participation of civil society and specifically with the objective of supporting the Ukrainian reform agenda towards approximation to the EU. In addition, the Dutch Embassy made funds available in support of initiatives that promoted implementation of fundamental freedoms and protection of the rights of groups of people that were subject to discrimination (Embassy NL, 2014). Between 2008 and 2014, the Dutch allocated a total of €36.5 million to the EaP countries through the MATRA programme and €6.1 million through the Human Rights Fund with the highest expenditure in Ukraine – circa 30% (MFA NL, 2015).

Data also revealed that between 2008-2013 the UK funded bilateral projects for civil society in the amount of ca. €1,350,000 (British Embassy Kiev 2013) and the Swedish embassy budgeted around €25 million for projects between 2011-2013 via its Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) (MFA Sweden, 2009). The Swedish policy, entitled “Policy for Support to Civil Society in Developing Countries within Swedish Development Cooperation” outlined the Swedish strategy on civil society in its partner countries mainstreamed through capacity development of civil society organisations and developing their legal and institutional environment (MFA Sweden, 2009). Specifically, for Ukraine (but also Moldova), the overall objective of such support aimed at deeper integration with the EU. In both countries, the Sida Agency, shared its expertise, know-how, experience, lessons learned and ideas with its main European partner, the EU Delegation. A Swedish diplomat, member of one of the largest MS embassies present in Kiev, emphasized that “Sweden is one of the biggest bilateral donors in Ukraine, and we spend, through

Sida, about €25 mil EUR/year⁴⁹, and we do close coordination with the EU, as the main goal is to promote EU integration on different sectors – we focus on democratic governance, which is mostly working with civil society these days” (interv. 22; Embassy Sweden, 2015b)

The empirical information collected in Ukraine, showed similar practice to that discovered in Moldova: an institutionalised form of interaction between the EU and national diplomatic actors, including in their role as donors (see Table 20 below). The data collected during the field-trips to Kiev were used to construct a typology of a communication infrastructure. This typology groups meetings based on level (participation based on diplomatic rank), focus (participation based on topic), membership (participation based on group affiliation), and formality (degree of ceremonialism of the meeting). Whereas data was initially collected in 2011, field-trips to Ukraine in 2013 and 2016 confirmed that these meetings continued to take place under the same headings. These meetings represent a communication infrastructure through which the staff from MS embassies and the EUD interacted, shared information on their activities in Ukraine, presented their strategies and programmes as well as insights from consultations with local actors such as civil society organisations.

Typology	Heading	Frequency	Description
Level	<i>General EU–member states meetings</i>		
	(1) HoMs: Meetings of Heads of Delegation (HoDs)	Weekly: every week (or every 2 weeks) on political issues, occasionally on civil society issues (approx. two–three times per year)	reflects the diplomatic ranking of the attendees
	(2) Deputy HoDs meetings	Monthly: on average every 2 weeks and at least once a month	
	(3) Counsellor’s meetings	Monthly & quarterly	

⁴⁹ Data interview referred to data till 2013. This data remained the same for 2014 and 2015, as indicated on the embassies website: <https://web.archive.org/web/20150816124541/http://www.swedenabroad.com:80/en-GB/Embassies/Kyiv/Development-Cooperation/Development-Cooperation-with-Ukraine>

Topic	(1) Thematic EU (donor) meetings	Monthly (some quarterly) → 6 to 12 per year on the following themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political (and Human Rights) issues - Development cooperation issues - Energy & transport issues - Press & information issues - Economic / Commercial counsellors issues 	have a specific agenda and are narrow in scope
	(2) Consultations with other EU donors	organised based on necessity	distinctive for the EU delegation called before launching its regular local calls for proposals for civil society project funding
	(3) Member states' roundtables		a type of meet and greet event, where civil society actors are invited in order to get acquainted with the diplomatic donor community and vice-versa
Group affiliation	<i>EU (donor) meetings within regional frameworks of cooperation</i>		
	(1) Visegrad Group (or V4)	Twice a year formally to several times per year informally	Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia
	(2) Nordic group (or Nordic Plus)	Twice a year and on ad-hoc basis	Sweden, Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands, Ireland, the UK (also Norway and Canada are part of Nordic Plus)
	(3) Baltic group	on ad-hoc basis	Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia (occasionally joined by Finland and Sweden)
Formality	(1) Formal events	organized based on the yearly agendas of EU delegations and member states' embassies; at least one event per actor	events organised by relevant stakeholders in each country as well as lunch, dinner or an "occasional coffee"
	(2) Non-formal events	<i>Information not disclosed</i>	
<i>Source: Author's compilation based on fieldwork conducted in Ukraine between 2011 - 2016</i>			

The meetings happened at the level of Heads of delegations and missions and deputy Heads as well as at the level of counsellors. The HoMs and deputy HoD meetings took place with regularity twice and once a month respectively and dealt with the general framework of relations with Ukraine; interviewees referred to these

as the more general meetings, which covered all important developments in relation to the AA agenda in the 2010-2015 period (interv. 18, 24, 42, 44). The thematic meetings involved the counsellor level on different thematic topics such as: human rights, development cooperation, energy and transport, economic and commercial and press and information. Depending on local developments in Ukraine, some of these meetings were as frequent as once a month; others occurred to a lower frequency, once every 3 and even 4 months. Altogether, this sums up to 7 different types of meetings that were reoccurring at least 8 times per month. This is to illustrate that a medium-sized embassy like the Netherlands, for example, managed to participate in 5 (two of which are HoMs and the deputy HoD meetings) and a large embassy like Germany managed to attend all of them (interv. 18, 47); while smaller MS embassies such as the Danish or the Austrian attended the HoMs and the deputy HoD meetings most often and had less possibility to attend the rest of the meetings, usually choosing the ones that were most relevant for their bilateral portfolio (interv. 44, 46).

The Visegrad and the Nordic Plus groups belonged to the regional frameworks of cooperation in Ukraine and were identical in terms of membership to their equivalents in Moldova (presented in Table 12, Chapter 4, and described in section 4.4). Although there was cooperation among the Baltic diplomats in Moldova, there was no formalised interaction under the Baltic group affiliation, which was present and active in Ukraine. The way diplomats engaged in these meetings relates to the discussion about relevance that will be carried out in section 5.4.; while how this infrastructure became a resource is discussed in relation to capabilities in section 5.5. Before that, we now turn to investigating the diplomatic practices of representing the Union in Ukraine, the goal to be attained according to the Lisbon Treaty and of interest to the first criterion, effectiveness.

5.3. Effectiveness: representing the Union

The Council note 17770/1/09 on EU diplomatic representation in third countries indicated that the responsibility for representation and cooperation was taken over by the EU Delegation in Ukraine from 1 January 2010 (European Council, 2010). Post-Lisbon, the EU delegation acquired legal recognition that upgraded the former

Commission representation, established in Kiev in 1993, to a full-blown Union delegation. This task of representing the EU as a whole that has been given to the EU delegations was embraced by the Delegation in Kiev as well. This was mainly possible due to the fact that the Commission representation in Ukraine also fulfilled duties of representation, together with the Presidency, but this was limited to non-CFSP issues. The pre-Lisbon Delegations, as presented in sections 5.1.3. and 5.2.2., carried out a large variety of tasks: presenting and implementing EU policies and also assisting the rotating Presidency locally. The Lisbon Treaty, then, gave the Delegations a formal role in external representation and cooperation with MS (art. 221 TFEU).

The main division of tasks regarding representation became straightforward: the EU delegation represented the EU in areas of exclusive and shared competences, while every member state represented their own interests bilaterally with the host country. Reflecting on the Delegation's activity pre-Lisbon, one of the political officers in the Delegation recalled that the task of the Presidency was a challenge and sometimes 'a disaster' when it was taken over by a small member-state embassy that had limited diplomatic personnel or had no experience, as national diplomats were focused only on bilateral relations (interv. 16). A Belgian diplomat clarified that this was a tricky position for their embassy, which was rather small, and the solution was to engage in intense cooperation with the Commission representation, giving them the lead on certain topics because they lacked the manpower (interv. 43). Therefore, as a Presidency, for a small embassy in Ukraine, to represent 25 MS was a huge challenge, and it was a matter of both human resources and know-how: "national diplomats posted here were not aware of the EU agenda and the context of relations with Ukraine within the Association Agenda from the EU's standpoint, but mainly from a national perspective" (interv. 16).

All interviewees put emphasis on the way the Lisbon Treaty affected their diplomatic work in Ukraine which was related to the technicalities that came with the duties of a rotating Presidency. Post-Lisbon, national diplomats perceived this as a positive change as it was difficult for them to be involved in the huge amount of tasks that came with this role and it was difficult for all embassies, small and large, as it was a 'heavy burden' (interv. 21). Some did not have the manpower (interv. 43), others did

not have the necessary financial or technical resources and ‘had to do a lot by way of oral diplomacy’ in cooperation with other embassies and even “sometimes we have to explain how the EU works to our own staff” (interv. 17). National diplomats also recalled instances when there were issues on the agenda that many MS could not cover, and it was more logical for the Delegation to represent the MS in these matters, especially in meetings with local authorities (interv. 22). As result, the change of the rotating Presidency from member-states to the Delegation was perceived by some as ‘a blessing’ (ibidem).

Being responsible for the rotating Presidency, meant having a coordinating role and a leading role for the MS in establishing contacts in the diplomatic community as well as with the local authorities. With the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon and the inauguration of the EEAS, Delegations have been charged with representing the whole Union and are delegated external representation on CFSP matters, originally the responsibility of the Presidency. The diplomats in the EU Delegation in Kiev stated that “after the launch of the EEAS this is the role of the EUD and we are carrying the leading role on this and it works smoothly especially since we were present in Ukraine before and we have been involved in coordination. The Lisbon Treaty came as a reminder as well: not to have 2 leading actors on the ground” (interv. 23). This means that, with taking over the Presidency tasks in representation and coordination, the EU Delegations became responsible for all EU competences, including the CFSP: according to political officers in the Delegation, this provided continuity to EU actions in Ukraine, which used to be a challenge in the pre-Lisbon setting (interv. 16).

The Council Decision establishing the EEAS⁵⁰ had also foreseen that the Union Delegations would work closely with the MS embassies and share information in addition to their representation role. So, assuming the role of the Presidency, implied, in practice, chairing and coordinating the vast number of meetings for all EU actors present in Ukraine. For the EUD, the Lisbon Treaty also meant more work: “we started to coordinate more and have a lot of meetings with the MS – we had to organize meetings and events, to find compromises and engage in work that resembles the Council in Brussels” (interv. 16). The Delegation in Kiev, hence,

⁵⁰ Council of the European Union, “Decision Establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service (2010/427/EU)”, *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 201/30, 26 July 2010

became responsible for maintaining the framework of cooperation with member-states (interv. 23). This task came with a logistical burden as officers in the Delegation had to negotiate and find a date that suited everyone in the diplomatic community, which could be 'a nightmare', especially when the person in charge had to accommodate the schedules of all 25 ambassadors (interv. 16, 19, 23). As one officer exemplified: "we have learned to be a bit dictatorial - and if they cannot come we ask them to delegate someone" (interv. 16). The other logistical task was reporting – the EUD had to write minutes of the meetings and to report back to Brussels; in these type of assignments, interviewees mentioned that they did not provide comments on the positions of the MS nor any advice, just reporting, i.e. stating the facts (interv. 16). Diplomats, therefore, appreciated this work performed by the EU not only because it 'made the embassies' life easier' but also because the EUD was doing it better than the national representations and was relying on a bigger number of staff than the embassies (interv. 22). Some even emphasized that MS should seek the services provided by the EUD to a bigger extent as post-Lisbon it is, de facto, becoming more influential as an institution in Ukraine (interv. 24).

Diplomats seemed to share the opinion that the EUD was performing a good job of holding coordination meetings (interv. 22, 43, 47) and even highlighted that this was a good service provided by the EUD to the MS (interv. 42). Political officers in the Delegation observed that, post-Lisbon, the role of MS had decreased since the coordination meetings are chaired by the EUD, which had the biggest number of staff and hence a bigger and specialized capacity (interv. 16, 48). According to them, the EUD in Kiev resembled a Secretariat, used as a 'back office' by the MS: "this implies constant talks, meetings, interactions, phone calls, emails; it is mainly a job with a high degree of communication" (interv. 16). On a daily basis, the EUD staff gathered information, analysed it, collected information from MS and local stakeholders and explained the details to both parties. Member-states observed the high degree of professionalism shown by their colleagues in the EUD and appreciated the effort that went into coordination (interv. 22, 45). The EUD staff were also proud of the fact that it was the EU Delegation that had the expertise on how to represent the EU, on a concrete practical level: "we have this practical knowledge and MS acknowledge this expertise and through this, we gain their trust in representing the EU and, by extension, them" (interv. 16).

In practice, the cooperation became formalized and the Delegation in Kiev had the leading role in organizing the common meetings: a wide variety ranging from meetings attended by the ambassadors such as the HoMs to the thematic ones such as trade, attended by economic counsellors (interv. 45). The Delegation's activity in Kiev of coordinating the wide and diverse meetings, as presented in Table 20, made it embrace a network rather than a hierarchical structure. But, "this also comes as a reflection of the many DGs represented within the Delegation and the different policy areas we are dealing with - justice, development and cooperation and others" (interv. 19). The network structure was a strong point for the Delegation, especially in their effort of keeping all MS on board: this meant that countries with a portfolio on visa-liberalisation or on trade or on human rights were provided with a setting for information-sharing (interv. 18). Given the focus of EU-Ukraine relations on the signing of the AA, member-states supported its leading role: "it has access to decision-makers and to all relevant stakeholders" (interv. 46). Given the EUD's high profile on the rule of law and the judiciary, for example, member-states agreed to only be informed and were not concerned with the fact that the EUD did not discuss its programme in this area with them (interv. 18). They also noticed, that during the crisis in Ukraine, member-states were engaging with local actors without conducting a needs-assessment exercise: "so after the EUD took over the donor coordination meeting (to deal with the crisis in Ukraine) that information-sharing became more frequent and a consortium was created on certain specific topics, such as anti-corruption, judicial affairs and others. The EUD is now inviting Ukrainian experts that can speak to the EU diplomatic community in one forum. So these working meetings are very practical for all sides. In the donor assistance meetings, the human rights and the economic meetings there are frequent meetings with the Ukrainian side through which the Delegation brings attention to issues which are not yet made public" (interv. 46).

Evidence collected in Ukraine in 2013 and 2016 has shown that the appreciation for these coordination meeting grew and member-states acquired, in addition to the instrument of bilateral diplomacy, the EU one, through which they could achieve their foreign policy objectives in Ukraine. If an embassy wanted to initiate a meeting on a topic relevant to it, that did not fall under any of the meetings presented in Table 20, it would request the premises of the Delegation and their know-how on the subject

matter (interv. 24). In the framework of meetings coordinated by the Delegation, even though the agenda was offered by the Delegation, MS embassies could make adjustments and propose points of discussion (interv. 22, 24). These meetings were useful as they represented a framework for coordination: diplomats saw what others were doing and were getting a common view on the developments in Ukraine and were working on démarches together, as a follow-up to the debriefings (interv. 45).

Nonetheless, as an EU political officer noted, member-states did not appreciate it when the Delegation took the lead on matters that were of national interest to them, such as migration, education or visas and in these cases; so the EUD was monitored by the MS (interv. 16). Given the fact that the Lisbon Treaty expects the Delegations to step up their cooperation with the member-state embassies toward a common approach (art. 32), the next section will bring forward the diplomatic practices that exist in this sense in Ukraine.

5.4. Relevance: ‘common approach’ in Kiev

In this section, evidence is reviewed in relation to corporate diplomatic practices in Ukraine in order to assess relevance, the criterion that focuses on the formulation and implementation of a common approach by the EU Delegation and member-state embassies (for details of the operationalisation in the analytical section: see Chapter 3). What comes across from the interviews conducted in Ukraine, is that similarly to the Moldovan case, decision-making is done in Brussels, whilst the common approach is worked out at the level of COREPER and the COEST working groups and then at the level of the Council. Member-states considered that the gist of actual coordination took place in Brussels and not so much on the ground, hence some understood the common approach as the effort of keeping to a consistent message that came from Brussels and of fostering a common understanding among national representations (interv. 44). Hence, the common approach for the EU Delegation was “the way that we act on the ground [...] and that we do what we are instructed from Brussels, and the MS do not interfere in this process: for example in the AA negotiation on the ground, there are no interferences from MS, as they are only observers” (interv. 16). The framework of the common approach, as understood on

the ground, was enacted via the meetings, especially through the practice of debriefing at the HoMs meetings (interv. 19).

Even though national diplomats stated that, in practical terms, it was not clear what the common approach was about as most of the guidelines and positions were streamlined in Brussels (interv. 45), from the conduct of their diplomatic activity it appears that the common approach was, for them, to have a common position on Ukraine. For example: for the Austrians, it was about a common understanding, for the Germans it was about speaking with one voice, for the Danes it was about unity among member-states, for the Poles and the Belgians it was about a unified position - on Ukraine (interv. 21, 43, 44, 46, 47). The common approach referred to having a common platform where discussions between diplomats took place, such as during the meetings coordinated by the EUD, where individual member-states presented their positions and after discussion could, thereafter, present the EU position to the host country in a united way (interv. 21). Some put the emphasis on the fact that on the ground it was easier to join a common opinion, as result of participation in the meetings, even if some member-states were not completely aware of the details of the developments in Ukraine (interv. 44). And, that in practice, the common approach could be observed during the common meetings where MS shared their approach on different issues in Ukraine and where they worked on common guidelines (interv. 46). Political staff in the Delegation also emphasized that the implementation of art 35(C) concerning the common approach could be observed through the activity of member-states in Ukraine and their contribution on shaping a common EU position (art. 16). For them, this seemed a natural development since in Ukraine there was the same view on the AA being a tool for transformations in Ukraine (interv. 19). A Czech diplomat developed the argument further, arguing that, within the coordination meetings organised by the EUD on all different levels, national diplomats tried to look for any differences between the EU and national policies and sought support on EU policies and instruments such as the AA; hence “we can, at this level, find some coherence among us” (interv. 24).

In the practice of diplomacy in Ukraine, the common meetings led the way to complementarity among all actors. The EU maintained different forms of dialogue with Ukraine, and in preparation to these dialogues, the MS were consulted by the

Delegation on how to approach developments in different sectors such as the justice sector or the human rights. As one Dutch diplomat recalled, “we prepared the papers jointly: together with the Delegation and the experts from Brussels and we discussed them with the local authorities. And it would be impossible to do this bilaterally” (interv. 18). This seemed to be an instance when using complementarity was quite successful (ibidem). Evidence further showed that, in practice, the common approach was best exercised in the HoMs meetings where the place and opportunity was given to everyone to talk about concerns on Ukraine and developments in the country as well as on the human rights situation. These were the most frequent meetings organised by the HoD and all EU ambassadors participated, as Table 20 presented. Even more so, the points raised in these meetings and the discussions culminated with the development of the HoMs report that was, thereafter, transmitted to Brussels: “the meetings where member-states are most interested in are HoMs and the thematic ones - Political and human rights issues. These are the meetings where the most advanced form of cooperation happens with developing a report at the end” (interv. 48).

A prominent example of the common approach within the HoMs meetings as well as the Political and human rights meetings was the cooperation between member-states that resulted in the Cox-Kwasniewski mission. In May 2010, the Ukrainian Prosecutor General’s Office had opened a series of criminal cases against the Ukrainian politician and former Prime Minister of Ukraine Yulia Tymoshenko. In October 2011 she was charged with abuse of power in connection with her approval of a Russian gas contract in 2009 and was sentenced to seven years in prison. The EU diplomatic community in Ukraine initiated a joint exercise of monitoring: “a few MS proposed, in the HoMs meetings, to launch an observation exercise of this case and the EU Delegation took the lead on this. We CC-ed everyone on the issue, we have agreed on our schedules and every MS has drafted memos on the matter. Out of 24 MS present on the ground, about 14-15 represented the core team while some have been observers in this case only once” (interv. 23). This joint exercise was one of the main points on the agenda of the meetings at the level of the HoDs and Deputy HoDs. However, after 3 months this task became an exhausting one and not every MS was happy to attend the meetings as there were no developments in Ukraine on the matter. Yet, this became a good example of burden-sharing between

the Delegation and the MS: “this gave the feeling that we are one group and we could show unity” (ibidem). Most observations continued on the level of the deputies. Thereafter, in June 2012, the Cox-Kwasniewski mission was launched on the initiative of the European Parliament with the sole purpose to resolve the issue of “selective persecution” exemplified by Yulia Tymoshenko’s case, which remained a key obstacle to signing the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU at that time. During this mission, both the EU delegation and the MS embassies played a key role in monitoring the local developments in the Tymoshenko case and serving as contact points for the Cox-Kwasniewski visits in Ukraine.

Another example of the common approach provided by all interviewees was the Europe Days event when the EU Delegation brought together all MS, every year in May (particular details provided in interv. 17, 43, 45, 46, 47). Europe Days have been officially celebrated in Ukraine since 2003 and co-organised by the EU delegation and MS embassies in cities around Ukraine. In 2015, for example, Ukrainian citizens had the opportunity to participate in quests and flash-mobs, training sessions on applying for EU grants and discussions on EU integration with the main focus on the idea that Ukrainians themselves must take the initiative to spur the development of their state (EU in Ukraine, 2015). Other examples of public diplomacy activity initiated by the Delegation were the series of events where the Delegation invited MS to participate in sharing information and practices on Erasmus and the DCFTA (interv.46).

Evidence of joint action on the ground came also at the initiative of member-states and the Stronger Together campaign served as a positive example of “a real common project” (interv. 43). The Dutch, the Swedish and the British claimed ownership for this campaign (interv. 18, 22). In 2012, the British Embassy funded a project to determine how Ukrainians perceived the EU and to raise their awareness of the benefits that signing the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, including a DCFTA, would bring. On the basis of this research, the UK created a blueprint for a possible communications campaign, in which Ukrainian, EU and international partners could work together (Embassy UK, 2013). As the British Ambassador stated: “the research that we funded has shown that we need to consolidate and coordinate our efforts to provide comprehensive information about the EU and

present clear and well-defined arguments in favour of EU integration” (ibidem). Subsequently, the Swedish embassy took the initiative to transform this research into a comprehensive information campaign and they obtained support from Brussels, where there was concern that there was not enough done on informing the Ukrainian public people about the AA: “sometimes, when we feel very strongly about something and we feel that Brussels needs to focus more attention to these areas then we draft the HoMs report” (interv. 22). Similarly, the Dutch explained the benefits of this campaign, but also drew attention to the fact that the EU partners started it rather late (the campaign started in September 2013, 2 months before the scheduled signing of the AA in Vilnius). However, inspired by the UK embassy, the Dutch emphasized the quite diverse approach of public awareness-raising involving EU ambassadors: “we also have the DCFTA road-shows when the national ambassadors go throughout the country on talks, interviews and public appearances on explaining the AA” (interv. 18).

Between 2010 and 2015, the political officers in the Delegation emphasized, they always cooperated with the MS embassies and “in general there are no troublemakers and it depends on the local conditions – in Ukraine the diplomatic environment is friendly – we meet for lunch and dinner also and we share information or provide MS with the information they require” (interv. 23). The Delegation organised joint meetings with the local authorities in Ukraine, co-organised with the MS which was holding the Presidency of the Council in Brussels. The Delegation also identified that there were member-states that tried to influence the Delegation’s positions such as Poland, Romania, Slovakia or Hungary, hence, the Delegation hosted bilateral talks with them to acknowledge the importance of their competences in this region (interv. 16). And although the MS seemed happy about the EUD taking leadership post-Lisbon, they were still trying to preserve their own visibility, their autonomous position: “Great Britain has its own interests, own agenda, says something but does something else, then it is difficult to identify the real interest. Netherlands is very open, straightforward, transparent, together with Germany and Sweden they do not behave like those major donors to the EU budget (even if they are): they are very generous, distant from lobbying their own interest unlike Poland, Romania or Hungary. The immediate neighbours of Ukraine have an

agenda, so they use EU diplomacy for their own interests, yet being too sure of their expertise makes them commit mistakes” (ibidem).

Nonetheless, member-states tried to create synergies between their own national diplomacy and that of the EU. National embassies considered that they knew certain practices regarding the conduct of diplomacy in Ukraine: “Sometimes the EUD comes with questions and we know how to solve this effectively given our expertise and time spent here as a diplomatic entity. For instance, it makes no sense to write letters or notes to national authorities trying to solve an issue, I would propose to embrace a demarche approach to make the counterparts meeting with you, to listen and take a punch because you need to be very aggressive in order to achieve something and not to be very polite and nice and Western-like behaviour but more aggressive” (interv. 24). The diplomatic *démarches* are a form of diplomatic correspondence delivered to the appropriate official of the government and generally seek to persuade, inform, or gather information from a foreign government. Considering the practice of writing letters or notes to the national authorities trying to solve an issue is a futile exercise, diplomats shared their practice on a *démarché* approach: “for instance, there are not that many *démarches* here in comparison to Moscow where we were doing this once a month. There are *démarches* on LGBT but this makes no sense, because with LGBT we need public events instead of *démarches*” (ibidem).

Empirical evidence showed that there is a tendency to form group affiliations in the diplomatic community in Ukraine (also shown in Table 20): according to some it seemed that “too many embassies means formation of groupings” (interv. 42). Some noted that such constellations emerged on the basis of their geographical proximity to Ukraine and not so much for their political ambitions (interv. 18). The Visegrad group included Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, commonly known as V4, which as in in Moldova exhibited various examples of formulating a common approach, a lot of which was reflected in their public diplomacy activities. The V4 had a strong cooperation in Ukraine and proposed certain events, were meeting with local authorities and were engaging with the media and advocating for similar things; all of these in relation to Ukraine were done in line with the EU agenda on the AA (interv. 21). As was already presented in Chapter 5, the V4 set up a

common Fund (Visegrad Fund 2013); considered an example of strategic cooperation based on similar interests: “there are meetings planned for strategic coordination and redirecting funds to both projects and individuals” (interv. 12). Diplomats also highlighted the Nordic group (Sweden, Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands, Ireland, the UK) and the Baltic group (Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia) as the two other entities which were active in Ukraine. As noted in Chapter 5, in Moldova as well as in Ukraine, the Nordic group led on the matter of the ‘good donorship’ principle. This principle referred to coordination as the main goal between the members on sharing similar standards, on logistical aspects in particular (similar reporting, auditing etc.) and on complementing each other’s work.

According to Nordic diplomats, the Baltics in Ukraine have played an important role – they exchanged with the Ukrainian counterparts their examples on reforms, and they offered national advisors to work with Ukrainian institutions on reforms (interv. 45). Evidence showed that there was also strong cooperation between the Nordic and Baltic groups. There were regular Baltic-Nordic lunches; diplomats stated that “there is a high level of trust: discussing who heard what and who says what, we do agreements on the phone even, and there is coordination of joint activities such as common conferences or visits” (interv. 42). In 2014, for example, the foreign ministers of the eight Nordic and Baltic countries - Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden – met in Tallinn, as Estonia was leading the Nordic-Baltic cooperation in the area of foreign and security policy which resulted in the meeting of the 6 EU ambassadors in Kiev (without Iceland and Norway) for exchange of information on developments in Ukraine and was an example of good coordination among EU partners (ibidem). Also, after Russia’s occupation of Crimea, there was a common Nordic view that the security situation in their vicinity had notably deteriorated and, on the ground, a stronger Nordic-Baltic cooperation resulted in activities conducted in Crimea which increased their visibility in the region (ibidem). Outsiders to the group also mentioned that in the conflict region the Baltics had been involved and specifically noticed that Lithuania became extremely active (interv. 42).

Diplomats also stated that both the Baltic and the Nordic group had a good image in Ukraine; some argued that their common cooperation, although taking place on an

ad-hoc basis “is mutually beneficial to work together towards the Ukrainian authorities as we can offer a multiplier effect for Ukraine” (interv. 45). Once a year, members of the 2 groups organised the Nordic Business Days, where speakers of the forum provided their updates regarding the investment climate and progress of reforms as well as shared success stories and opportunities in Ukraine (ibidem). One diplomat even noticed that on behalf of the Ukrainian authorities there was a preference for attending events organised by EU member-states and that the ones organised by the Baltic-Nordic group were given importance (interv. 42). The Nordic members explained that their most frequent meetings happened in their capitals where positions were coordinated, that they had a database through which they shared sensitive information: “what unites us is a similar societal background, same bilateral interests in Ukraine” (interv. 46). This reflected on the ground, where they offered joint services to their citizens in third countries, they shared their reports and invited common guest speakers. Although they have a Nordic Council which is the official body for the inter-governmental cooperation of the Nordics through which they seek Nordic solutions, on the ground their cooperation was flexible, not hierarchical and not so formal and was mainly a framework for working together in Ukraine, reflecting a shared feeling that “together we are stronger” (interv. 45). They explained that in Ukraine, they had common interests to pursue, hence their joint collaboration was reflected via the regular lunches, common events such as exhibitions and organisation of common meetings with local authorities and networking events in the banking, forestry and telecommunications fields as well as the presence, in Ukraine, of Nordic companies which were cross-owned (ibidem).

Some referred to the constellation of the ‘like-minded’ in looser terms and not necessarily belonging to a group but rather “when it comes to Ukraine it means that it is a matter of geography and this can be Nordic-Baltic together with Poland and the MS bordering Ukraine. We have a keener interest and we are fairly like-minded” (interv. 22). However, evidence also showed that there were differences within the like-minded groups of member states. For instance, regarding the signing of the AA, some of the Baltics, the eastern MS and the ones bordering Ukraine took the position that the AA should be signed at any costs, while Sweden or the Netherlands disagreed. In this sense, Sweden belonged to the like-minded Nordic countries together with the Netherlands, United Kingdom and Germany (that is not officially a

member of the Nordic group). Similar observations were made about the Visegrad group. The Visegrad group tried to be more visible in terms of public diplomacy and different projects, student mobility as well. One member of the Visegrad noted that they were divided by topic area around which a group of interested countries could converge or diverge: “Poland is pushing for its own directive and this is visible on the ground and in Brussels. For instance, Polish are outspoken on sensitive political matters and without consulting anyone they announced that there might be a possibility for Ukraine to sign the AA next year (2014). Subsequently Ukrainian politicians took this as a departure point in their demarchés, which is not necessarily supported by everyone else in the diplomatic community. And definitely this was not the position of the EU” (interv. 24). Outsiders noticed that despite the fact that the Visegrad group was institutionalised, its members were not politically aligned on the issue of Ukraine and Russia’s interference in Ukraine, hence there was divergence (interv. 43). In contrast, in less sensitive areas, like LGBT, there was no ‘cognitive dissonance’ (interv. 24).

In Ukraine, between 2010 and 2015, there were also other, sporadic, joint collaborations among member-states. There were instances of a common cooperation between Benelux, represented on the ground by the Dutch and Belgian embassies. In 2014, the three Benelux foreign ministers called for the protection of minorities and the need to strengthen autonomy in Ukraine. They visited the Maidan place in Kiev to place a wreath in memory of the victims of the clashes of February and expressed solidarity with the Ukrainian people. During the 2015 visit the ministers of foreign affairs of the 3 countries discussed the situation in Ukraine, while at the same time promoting the reform agenda: “there are a number of volatile situations on the EU’s borders. Ukraine is struggling with enormous challenges. Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and the EU are there to assist Ukraine as much as possible” (Reynders, 2015). For these 2 meetings, the embassies coordinated the common programme, rotated which country took the lead and also hosted meetings with CS actors and informal meetings for the Benelux ministers with the colleagues from the EUD and some MS embassies (interv. 43). In addition, the Benelux member-states took part in the non-formal events (lunches, dinners) of the Club of the French speaking diplomats that brought together Belgian, Romanian, French, Hungarian and German diplomats (ibidem). Some cooperations were ad-

hoc, issue based: there was temporary Danish-Belgium cooperation on a brewery where both parties encountered the issue of labelling bottles in terms of the competition policy and they shared their experience with the Ukrainian interested parties (interv. 46).

Others, although also issue-based, are rather cooperations chosen based on the personal preference of the member-state. For example, Germany did not belong to any of the groups and cooperated closely with Poland on decentralisation and humanitarian aid. This was a choice made since the V4 group did not have the greatest political impact, according to the Germans, and had competing interests within the group, hence cooperation was solely with Poland (interv. 47). Whereas the Nordic group is more cohesive internally, Germany chose to collaborate with the most active member, Sweden, on judiciary reform (ibidem). In Ukraine, Germany resembled Poland in Moldova by choosing “go-it-alone” tactics. The Baltics highlighted that while their main partners were the Baltics, the Nordics and the Visegrad, they tried to collaborate with all, yet “with Germans I cannot make connections [...] G7 is more important to them. Germany is reluctant to share and we have no binding elements with them” (interv. 42). In Ukraine, Germany was very active in the multilateral fora that involved the G7⁵¹ and was seen as the local leader⁵² (interv. 42, 44, 47). Germany included Sweden, a non-G7 member, in their G7 démarches (interv. 47); as some have noted the Nordics usually co-signed the G7 statement and it seemed that “there is a willingness to coordinate with the countries that are economically active in Ukraine” (interv. 44).

Like Germany, Austria also had preferential treatment when it comes to joint cooperation. Austria was not part of any of the groups mentioned in Table 20 and was not a member of the G7 either, and preferred ad-hoc collaboration based on its evaluation of the diplomatic activity in Ukraine. According to them, Visegrad was the least cohesive group, the Baltics were a more congruent one, but had diverging opinions on certain Ukrainian developments, whilst the Nordic one is a group of natural allies and is the most coherent (interv. 44). Although they met and shared information with all member-state, their cooperation projects were established based

⁵¹ G7 is a group of countries with the 7 largest advanced economies in the world. Its members are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States. It was founded to facilitate shared macroeconomic initiatives by its members in response to the collapse of the exchange rate 1971.

⁵² In 2015 Germany held the chair of the G7 hence such a development reflects as well on Germany's priorities.

on who was strong on the issue in Ukraine and so far, they indicated “good relations with the G7 members” (ibidem), which means Germany, Italy, France and the UK. The “go-it-alone” tactic was also common for Poland, which pursued a parallel national agenda in Moldova, and also did so in Ukraine. The most prominent example of derogating from the common position was the Polish one on the issue of the Tymoshenko case. The lowest common denominator in the Tymoshenko case were the Council conclusions, to which all MS had agreed; in the meetings the common EU position was agreement on a set of conditions, to which Poland also agreed. As the political officer in the Delegation noted, thereafter, certain member-states, especially Poland stated that the EU should go ahead and sign the AA regardless of the conditions established (interv. 16). Diplomats then mentioned that what can be observed in Ukraine is that although the Delegation invited everyone to the common meetings, only 2/3 of the MS usually attended and were “the same suspects: Germany, France, the UK; and we work on démarches together vis-à-vis our Ukrainian partners” (interv. 47).

Despite instances of ‘go-it-alone’ strategy, what can be observed is that the communication infrastructure, most often than not, became the medium through which the common approach, as understood by the diplomatic community in Ukraine, was shaped and took the form of a common event, joint visits of European officials to Ukraine, joint HoMs reports and even a common position. Further examination of the communication infrastructure as a resource, together with other political and social capital available on the ground is conducted in the following section.

5.5. Capabilities: diplomatic resources in Kiev

Between 2010 and 2015, the main resource of the EU Delegation, that has developed over time was the communication infrastructure presented in Table 20 in section 5.2.2. of this chapter. Evidence collected on the ground and presented here thus far shows how these meetings in which both EU and national diplomats are involved accounted for some degree of institutionalised diplomatic practices in Ukraine. The Delegation became an information hub and for its staff it was key to have, on the ground, well informed diplomats, with a clear understanding of what are

the key problems to be assessed in Ukraine or what are the key sources of information that should be targeted by them “and to have them on the same side, on the same page, understanding clearly what are our (EU) objectives” (interv. 20). The wide and varied typology of meetings implied, for the Delegation, a daily maintenance of the communication infrastructure. This included, *inter alia*, organisation and coordination of the meetings at different levels and on the different topics, interaction with national diplomats via emails, phones as well as negotiation and establishment of the agenda, taking minutes and writing reports and providing feedback to the MS and collecting their feedback (interv. 16, 20, 23). Being the leading actor, hence, came with the burden of the secretarial responsibility: “we keep a mailing list with all responsible persons in the different sectors to ensure that we invite them to all the meetings. We prepare the agenda of the meetings and MS have the right to propose points of discussion to the agenda which are raised and discussed in the meeting” (interv. 23); and it was the agenda that presented difficulty: “[it] is a nightmare to find a date that would suit everyone” (interv. 16).

National diplomats noticed that as result of being the main coordinator of these meetings, the EUD became more valued not only by MS but also by local actors as this role gave the Delegation more political weight given the importance of the AA in the relationship between Ukraine and the EU, “hence the EUD is seen as an EU embassy; the EU ambassador is very active in making statements and is pro-active in engaging with local actors and with Brussels. These statements usually reflect our position as well” (interv. 46). The Delegation seemed to have a system in place (interv. 22) and it considered itself responsible for the framework of cooperation provided by these meetings (interv. 23). The Delegation organized coordination meetings at different levels in terms of diplomatic ranking as well as on different topics: these were meetings at the level of HoDs, of the deputy HoDs, of information officers, on trade and even on administrative issues and also, when needed, established ad-hoc working groups. These meetings (with the exception of the ad-hoc ones) had a regular character of monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly gatherings (interv. 23; also Table 20). National diplomats put emphasis on how the HoMs, deputy HoD and the counsellor-level meetings became a fora for sharing opinions and exchange of opinions: “everybody gets an invitation to these meetings and gets a chance to explain their views” (interv. 21) and “we have a system of where we can

share reports, a system where we can share information, we have coordination on the ground” (interv. 22). The information network provided by the EUD to the MS, was therefore the place for coordination in the areas of relevance to them and sharing and receiving information. Information was a resource sought by MS in these meetings especially since “things have improved in the manner that they(the Delegation) got more resources and they can attend more meetings locally and they can cover things that MS cannot and they make our lives easier” (ibidem). The Delegation was aware of this and stated that “we exchange certain information with the MS, even when they have questions or want to discuss certain issues and we do this via the mailing list”.

The Delegation was dedicated throughout 2010-2015, according to the interviewees, to sharing information but also to stimulating discussion and coordinating with the MS: “when we issue press releases, MS are given the opportunity to comment and then we distribute it to the local media and we place it on our website” (interv. 23). The previous section also emphasized that the common approach was exercised via these meetings where all EU ambassadors engaged in debriefing to the extent that if someone was missing than they debriefed via the phone. The HoMs meetings in particular were considered the most eloquent example as they resulted in joint reports: “the HoMs meetings draft a report, jointly prepared with the ambassadors of the national embassies present in Ukraine and focus on the most important affairs in the country, which are then sent to Brussels (via COREU)” (ibidem). The reports were shared through the common system – AGORA and COREU network - which carries communications related to CFSP and derives from the French term CORespondence EUropéenne. It involved exchanges of reports within the diplomatic network; most were political reports coming from the HoD. COREU allowed for a flow of information and these reports were prepared jointly by the HoD and the ambassadors of the MS (interv. 19). One national diplomat explained that AGORA is the electronic high security mail correspondence between the EU and MS embassies used by diplomats in order to have access to documents: “when we prepare updates on the human rights report, for example, we retrieve the draft, we share our views, then there is a meeting to discuss the views, then there is a re-write of the draft and we send it back through AGORA” (interv. 18). The Delegation considered that in this way, it provided a framework that fostered a good discussion and the added-value

was that MS could provide their own input and offer their know-how (interv. 23). Also, because “in the HoMs meetings it is agreed to speak without reservations and then, there are different issues brought under one umbrella” (interv. 48).

Member-states appreciated the high frequency and the many formats of the meetings, including formation of informal groups where they could take the lead on a subject area (interv. 44). And the fact that the discussions varied from political to non-political matters, especially for a country like Ukraine, that will not become a member-state and is implementing EU-driven reforms, the information-sharing was answering the need for having more coherent policies: “not all MS have a similar information from their own, national sources” (interv. 24). Some emphasized that if there was a bigger issue at hand from a national point of view, then the MS informed the EUD and via the common meetings a bigger transmission belt of information was formed (interv. 44). The sharing of information was perceived as a valuable practice especially for the smaller member-states (interv. 24, 42, 43, 44). For some, the main asset was to share information in order to have a common understanding that then resulted in feedback conveyed to their capitals and to Brussels (interv. 44). For others, it was important to send, as a national state, their policies and understand how they were different so that the EUD could take them into account because, on the ground, the implementation of foreign policy was key (interv. 24). Another positive effect of the meetings for member-states, was the interaction, in these meetings, with local experts invited to inform the diplomatic community on the internal developments in Ukraine (interv. 42, 43, 44, 47). The latter was considered by national diplomats as an added-value because this gave them the opportunity to streamline their views on the issues in the country; especially when the level of information was diverse among MS embassies, some knowing very little and others having a lot of details (interv. 47). As these meetings involved debriefings MS valued this as a learning exercise – participants reported on what they had done, who visited Ukraine and what was their vision regarding local developments (interv. 43).

The Delegation offered member-states meetings on every topic possible - energy, economic affairs, media, development cooperation and others shown in Table 20; at different levels - HoDs, deputies, political and economic counsellors and administration counsellors; and with high frequency - in all these varied

configurations diplomats would meet at least once a month. Nonetheless, some noted that the coordination role assumed by the EU was 'a little too good': "there are too many coordination meetings and then all I have to do is attend meetings and little time is left to do my job as a diplomat" (interv. 43). Others pointed out that attendance at the meetings was not very high, at the counsellors level, 1/3 of the embassies were not present (even the big MS such as France and Germany were not present for example) and were of interest for smaller MS such as Belgium, Latvia or Austria (interv. 42). The Delegation made the same observation: "member-states can be overwhelmed with the number and variety of meetings, for example there are only 13 MS attending the press meetings [...] or we share the agenda of the meetings but the capacity question is always present – MS embassies do not have enough capacity" (interv. 48). As one diplomat confirmed: "the reports produced by the EUD can be accessed by the MS and amended by us, but we do not always have the manpower to do so" (interv. 43). For others, it was not necessarily the manpower requirements, but rather the content of the meetings that made them less attractive: "The information shared at the meetings is not new for us [...] and while the positive aspect of these meetings is the invitation of experts, we already know them and there is no input for us and no Eureka moment" (interv. 42). The Delegation explained that attendance was not mandatory in order to be considerate of the capacity of all national embassies present in Ukraine, therefore, post-meetings they shared information with MS, for example "we have the weekly HoMs reports with MS shared on a secure channel, which is thereafter agreed by all Heads of missions and sent to Brussels" (interv. 48). Yet, one diplomat pointed out that not all embassies present in Ukraine were connected to the EU encrypted system (interv. 47).

Sharing of minutes of the meetings was not a practice observed on the ground, when one embassy participating in the meetings requested a report from the Delegation on that meeting it was given the response that 'this is not normal practice' (interv. 18). The Delegation itself mentioned that "the minutes of the meetings are kept internally and are not shared" (interv. 19). As result, member-states relied on their national colleagues who were either their 'allies' or the ones next to whom their embassy was located: the Dutch would ask the German, the Danish or the Swedish counterparts, the Latvians would ask the Lithuanians, Austrians – the Swedish or the German, the

Czech would ask the neighbouring embassies such as Hungary or Italy (interv. 18, 24, 42, 44). The diplomatic community itself was divided on the matter, some saw this as an opportunity for the EUD to become more transparent: “the EUD is making the agenda of these meetings, MS are engaged and share their views and concerns. And I think that this would be a point where the EUD could be more transparent in their communication with us: there could be a formula that they write notes and this would be with no diplomatic connotation, but for the purpose that we can track who said what and what is their position. It would be useful to have minutes and points of actions. We get lost and we cannot always attend, hence we do not always know whether we are expected to do something” (interv. 18). Others considered that this was an individual responsibility of the member-states, that there was never a need for minutes and that this would be an ‘unnecessary burden’ for the Delegation (interv. 22, 24, 47).

Information-sharing and reporting is not solely a core function of the Delegation in relation to its headquarters, the EEAS, but also, in relation to its member-states on the ground, in order to ensure consistency as the Council Decision establishing the EEAS prescribed. According to the data collected, this culture was still in the making between 2010 and 2015, and presented itself as a challenge for both parties. Political officers in the Delegation observed that the culture of sharing had not yet been established and was most efficiently exercised by only a few MS: “member-states do not share reporting as they write reports in their mother tongue and they debrief during the meetings orally, hence not all details are included” (interv. 19). National diplomats reiterated that information-sharing was a key-ingredient for policy shaping (interv. 44, 45). And although there was no policy shaping done on the ground, information-sharing, which was centralized via the EUD, was important in relation to Ukraine, as member-states were sharing comments on their support provided in Ukraine (interv. 45). Since the message that went to Brussels came from the EUD, national diplomats hoped that “the EUD includes the input that comes from MS so that the impact on policy-shaping happens” (interv. 44). Contrariwise, the EU Delegation sent reports to Brussels with no implication from the MS (with minor exceptions), as diplomats reported (interv. 21, 45).

Internally, within the Delegation, the political officers were responsible for collecting information and processing it which was then delivered to the Head of Delegation who processed it at the highest level, given the fact that the HoD interacted with the main stakeholders in Ukraine: the Prime Minister, the President, the ministers and other key actors (interv. 20). National diplomats mentioned that Mr. Jan Tombiński, the current HoD (the list of HoDs in Kiev is provided in Table 21), was a very open person, who was very involved and created a level of mutual trust among diplomats (interv. 42). His activity and professional attitude was remarked on by several diplomats also in relation to the host country, Ukraine where he was pro-active in engaging with local actors and with Brussels as well as in making statements; which were a reflection of the national positions (interv. 46). For some, the role of the HoD was clear: he played the role of the coordinator among member-states and was speaking on behalf of the EU, as an ‘advisor of the EU to Ukraine’, when stressing the importance of the need for reforms; messages that reflected the decisions taken in Brussels (interv. 43, 47).

Member-states also noticed that there was a duality in the nature of positions taken by the HoD on Ukraine and that there was a lack of clarity, in the diplomatic community, regarding the EU Ambassador (interv. 16, 18, 24). One political officer in the Delegation also stated that for those member-states that had linkages with Eastern Europe, and Ukraine more specifically, made them become ‘hostage of their past’ and that reflected on the position of those EU ambassadors which came from the neighbouring country like that of Mr. Tombiński, a Polish diplomat (interv. 16). In 2013, the Delegation in Ukraine, based on the action of the HoD, pursued a Byzantine-style diplomacy (the word ‘byzantine’ is used here to describe devious actions from the Byzantine Empire: intrigue, plotting, and bribing), like some of the national member-states neighbouring Ukraine: “for example, in the process of negotiation of the AA (negotiations with the Ukrainian counterpart) everything you say or do can be used against you and can be taken out of the context; therefore a Polish HoD pursuing national interests and not listening to EU political officers from the EUD has prejudiced the image of the EU in Ukraine. The ambassador is Polish, so he defines and represents rather Polish MFA interests rather than EU” (ibidem). Others, including the Polish diplomats, objected stating that the HoD presented the EU position and spoke on behalf of the EU and proposed a division of labour among

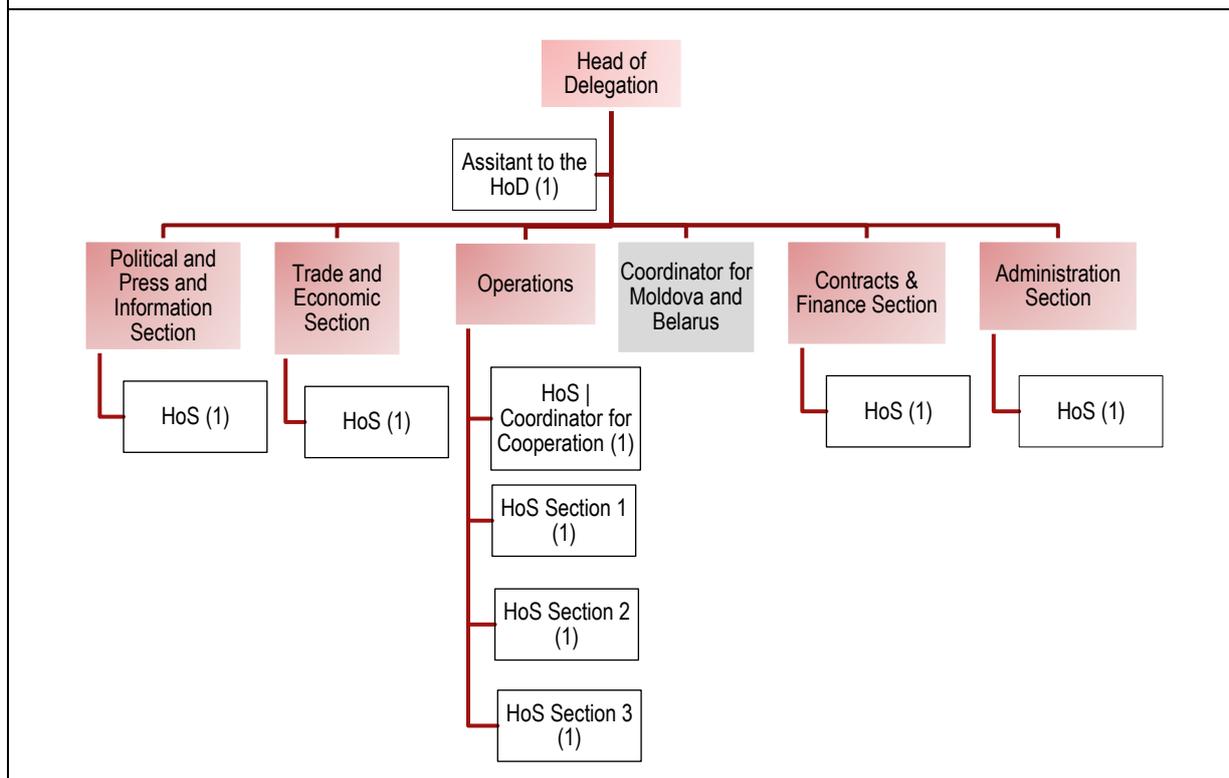
all EU ambassadors based on individual expertise and taking turns in the leading role in certain dossiers on Ukraine (interv. 21, 47).

Table 21: Head of EU Delegation in Kiev: 2004 - 2015⁵³		
Nr.	Name	Period in office
1.	Ian Boag*	2004 – 2008
2.	José Manuel Pinto Teixeira**	2008 - 2012
3.	Jan Tombiński	2012 - 2016
<p><i>Notes:</i> * Ian Boag was Head of Delegation of the Commission representation in Kiev **José Manuel Pinto Teixeira experienced the transition period from Commission representation to Union Delegation</p> <p><i>Source:</i> authors' compilation based on fieldwork conducted in Ukraine 2011-2016</p>		

The lack of clarity, in the diplomatic community between 2010 and 2015, was also related, as in the Moldovan case, to establishing a European esprit de corps and to the internal way of working in the Delegation. As presented in Chapter 2 (section 2.2.2.), post-Lisbon, the Delegation staff comprised Commission staff (DG RELEX, DG DevCo and DG Trade personnel), Council Secretariat staff and seconded national diplomats. Political staff typically came from the Council or the Member States as seconded national diplomats, whereas operational staff were often former Commission staff. Figure 7 below shows the pre-Lisbon organigramme of the EU Delegation which was the representation of the European Commission in Kiev, responsible for relations with Ukraine, Moldova (till 2005) and Belarus (till 2008). The Operations staff (DG DevCo) was the biggest element and together with Political (DG RELEX) and Trade (DG Trade) sections were in charge of the mandate of the Delegation on promoting political and economic relations between the EU and Ukraine. This meant everyday monitoring of the progress of the implementation of the PCA and later the ENP Action-Plan with Ukraine, and participation in the implementation of the EU's assistance projects, such as TACIS (interv. 15).

⁵³ Based on the data collected on the ground, an incomplete list of the HoDs is presented accounting for the last 3 HoDs.

Figure 7: Internal organisation of the EU Delegation in Kiev pre-Lisbon



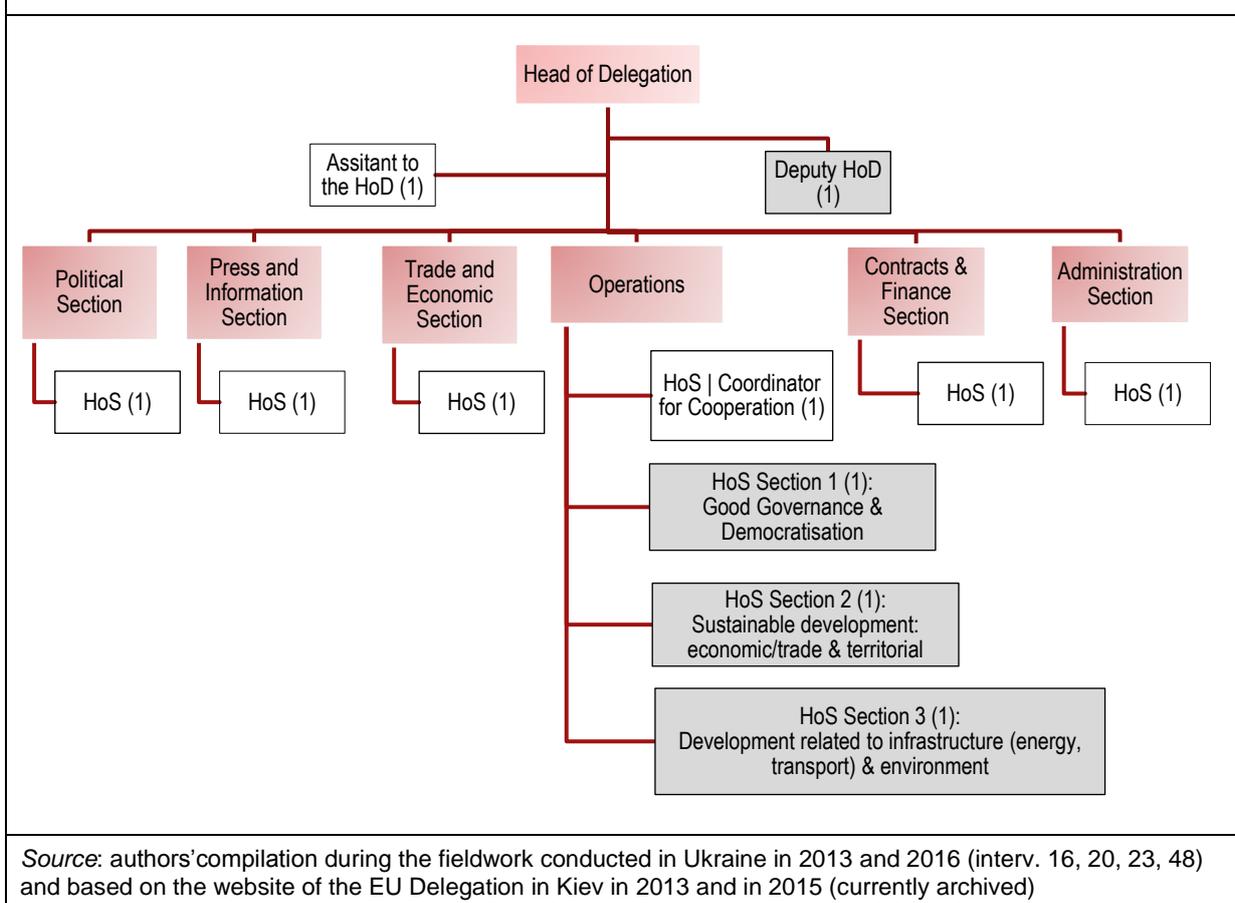
Source: authors' compilation during the fieldwork conducted in Ukraine in 2011 (interv. 15) and based on the website of the Commission representation in Kiev (currently archived)

Post-Lisbon, not only the structure of the Delegation changed but also all staff were placed physically in one building, which gave the staff an opportunity to meet: “we have now moved to one building - the Commission staff (DG Trade and DG DevCo) together with the EEAS staff and the Administration staff - instead of the 2 different buildings we used to be in” (interv. 23). The structure of the Delegation changed, in the sense that it had, in 2013, 1/3 of national diplomats with a Political Section separated from the Press and Information Section (see Figure 8). The HoD, the deputy HoD and the Political sections were all positions filled by different (national) diplomats who were working on the EU-Ukraine agenda: “we, in the Delegations are detached from the national level and are thinking about the broader European interests and, it happens that our colleagues, diplomats in the MS are critical about our work. But our mission is to look at the broader picture than the national overview, and be considerate of the European perspective” (interv. 16).

Out of a total of 102 people working in the Delegation in 2015, 28 were EEAS personnel and 74 were Commission personnel (see data in Table 16, section 5.1.3.).

Among the staff in the Delegation itself there was a clear distinction between sections: in the political section were the representatives of the EEAS whereas everyone else were considered Commission personnel. Officers in the Delegation noted that the Delegation was not one single unit but rather composed out of two internal parts: EEAS and DG DevCo (interv. 16). The exception was the Trade and Economic section that was positioned, internally, between EEAS and Commission, due to the nature of its dossier – the trade dossier was a political one given the negotiations on the AA, out of which the DCFTA was approx. 80% (interv. 20).

Figure 8: Internal organisation of the EU Delegation in Kiev 2013 -2015



Post-Lisbon, the sub-sections within the Operations section also changed in their focus, a change related to the EU-Ukraine negotiations on the AA/DCFTA and thus not related directly to the Lisbon Treaty. In 2015, sub-section 2 change its focus from Sustainable Development to Economic Cooperation, social and regional development. The Head of Operations Section, also known as HoS for Cooperation, referred to his dossier on Ukraine as well, meaning cooperation with Ukraine,

primarily dealing with central and local authorities with a big part of his agenda on decentralisation issues.

During the fieldwork conducted in Ukraine, it became obvious that tensions between institutions in Brussels are reflected in the Delegation and on-the-ground diplomacy. One tension referred to the 'turf war' within the EEAS – between people inside the EEAS and people from the national diplomatic service (interv. 16, 20). The latter spent, on average, 4 years in the Delegation, were employees of their respective MFAs and would return back to their home capitals, bypassing Brussels. In Kiev, this created a degree of mistrust between staff coming from Brussels and staff coming from the national capitals to the Political section: “some colleagues are not very happy to see them and have them on-board, even if they come from the same country, there are differences between them regarding working culture, understanding of EU intricacies, and they do not listen to the advice given” (interv. 16). The activity of the Delegation staff coming from the national diplomatic service showed that they had little knowledge about how Brussels worked and about the European practices (interv. 20). A second tension was related to the relationship between the EEAS and the Delegation. Although political officers believed that information should be exchanged equally and frequently between them and the EEAS, in practice, information flows were more frequently directed to Brussels than to Delegations (interv. 16, 20). This meant that political officers were not informed about the policy thinking in Brussels and about the most relevant issues on the political agenda, which made some in the Delegation think that “we (EUD and the EEAS) live in detached parallel worlds: we (EUD) do diplomacy the way we define it here, they (EEAS) do it the way they define it there (in Brussels)” (interv. 20).

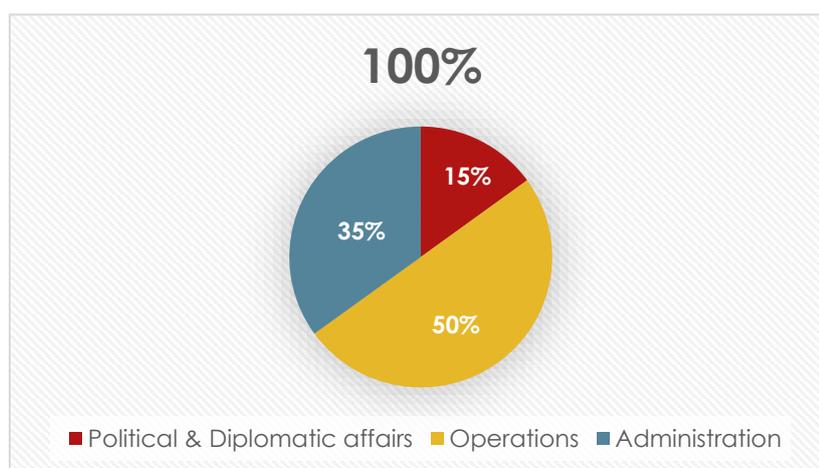
The third tension echoed the inter-institutional dynamic between EEAS and certain DGs in the Commission, such as DG DevCo. The Operations section in the Delegation (DG DevCo) worked, due to the nature of the relationship with Ukraine, on either highly sensitive issues or on political ones – corruption, energy, education – and on this sectoral cooperation level, their reports went straight to Brussels without input from the political officers (EEAS): “we have the possibility to see the reports a couple of days before they are published, but at that point, they are already approved in Brussels, so there is not much we (political officers) can do [...] and these reports need to be checked with the political section” (interv. 16). According to

interviewees, the institutional frictions became a logistical challenge for the staff working in the Delegation. For instance, within each EU delegation there is a public procurement office, which is also staffed by DG DevCo (Commission) personnel. The EEAS did not have its own budget until 2011, and the Commission refused to provide professional advice to the EEAS personnel within the EU delegations. The EEAS personnel had to learn the basics of running public tenders and writing contracts, which was not part of the job description of a political officer, while there were 15 people in the Delegation dealing with these affairs on a daily basis (interv. 15, 16).

When the EEAS was established the idea was to have all foreign policy instruments under one roof, which did not happen in the case of the Delegation in Kiev. The practice of (not) sharing information came up as an issue internal to the Delegation and some labelled this as a 'Brussels culture', even in the cases of staff working in the Operations section that had never worked in Brussels, "they act in a similar manner: on a regular basis they hide information or simply do not share" (interv. 20). Some explained that the Operations section also hired local staff, who are supervised by Commission staff (DG DevCo) who do not speak the local language (interv. 16). Besides adopting the 'Brussels culture', local staff also worked on monitoring the progress of reforms in Ukraine and evaluating, in 2013, "the 'huge progress' Ukraine achieved in certain sectorial cooperation matters and how some Ukrainian ministers are 'great reformers'" (interv. 16). This, in turn, resulted in huge criticism from Brussels and the member-states, but "since no one consulted with us, the EEAS staff in the Delegation, it was already too late" (ibidem).

For member-states, the institutional tensions were not a major concern since they seemed to have developed their personal contacts with 'the relevant people' in the Delegation and had access to the Delegation that responded to their needs (interv. 22, 47). What some pointed to as criticism was related to the content of the meetings coordinated by the Delegation as being aid-driven. Diplomats noted on several occasions that in Ukraine (like in Moldova) the conduct of diplomacy was aid-driven and the EU delegations had big Operations sections with a vast development cooperation dossier (interv. 18; 21, 24). As Figure 9 below shows, in the opinion of interviewees, the Delegation's activities between 2013-2015 were divided among operational, administrative, and political and diplomatic issues.

Figure 9: Structure of Work in EU Delegation in Kiev



Note: The data provided in this Table is based on the interviewees' own perception: they evaluated the structure of work of the EU delegation upon reflection of their assignments during the duration of their official posting and provided an estimate.

Source: authors' compilation based on fieldwork conducted in Ukraine in 2013

Only approximately 15 per cent of the work was seen as related to the main functions of traditional diplomacy such as gathering, synthesizing and producing information, intelligence and counter-intelligence, producing reports and policy advice for headquarters, representing EU interests through engaging in public diplomacy, or developing economic and commercial cooperation through engaging in trade diplomacy (interv. 20). Approximately 50 per cent of activity (the Commission legacy) was seen as focused on operational activities or what can be coined as sectoral diplomacy tasks, such as project management in the areas of good governance and democratization, economic cooperation and social and regional development, and infrastructure and environment-related developments. The legacy of Commission representations and a certain path-dependency was thus observed in Kiev. The Commission delegation had been implementing more technical tasks, such as project management, since it was established; and only later started to implement public diplomacy activities, mainly to promote and raise awareness on the EU implemented projects in Ukraine (details presented in section 5.1.3.). Thus, before the Lisbon changes, staff in the Commission representation were responsible, on a daily basis, for EU aid implementation, with little coordination with the member states. There were positive developments post-Lisbon in the sense that it resulted in

a wide communication infrastructure, coordinated by the EU delegation and open to all EU member states. In Ukraine, there were a lot of donor coordination meetings during the period under examination, and the EU played a crucial role in them (interv. 7, 12, 13, 14, 15, 24). To a large extent the practice of aid-driven activities remained and the communication infrastructure served as a helpful resource for conducting this type of diplomacy. And this is not necessarily an atypical type of diplomacy but rather matches with the priorities that stem from the ENP and EaP.

5.6. Conclusion

The empirical evidence presented in this chapter was collected during the field-work conducted in Ukraine as well as evidence collected from the study of secondary sources such as policy briefs, legislation, national and international reports as well as academic findings from scholarly literature on EU-Ukraine relations. The development of the bilateral relations between EU and Ukraine had been institutionalised first under the PCA, and then under the ENP and EaP respectively with the Association Agenda being at the core of this relation in the period under study. In Kiev, the European Commission had opened its Delegation as early as September 1993 and it served as liaison office for Moldova, till 2005 and for Belarus, till 2008. In order to discuss diplomatic performance, the evidence was presented in a structured manner according to the three criteria – effectiveness, relevance and capabilities – as operationalised in the analytical framework (Chapter 3).

The second and third sections of this chapter discussed effectiveness on two levels, one that explores the degree of democratic governance in Ukraine and the other that investigates the diplomatic practices of representing the EU in Ukraine.

Effectiveness, conceptualised generally as goal attainment, explored the level of democratic governance in Ukraine based on the level of adaptation to EU rules and norms. The point of reference here was the ENP Action Plan with Ukraine and the EU-Ukraine Association Agenda. To discuss how the EU Delegation in Kiev was embracing the representation function since the upgrade from Commission representation to a fully-fledged EU Delegation, the Lisbon Treaty was taken as reference point in discussing effectiveness.

In the case of Ukraine, the EU offered a framework for political association and economic integration within the AA which was a political commitment to come closer to the EU through aligning to the EU acquis. Monitoring reports outlined that, under the ENP, Ukraine was initially showing some progress, but the pace of reforms was slow or even stagnated. The pace of adaptation grew with the newly elected President, Petro Poroshenko, after the political and civil turmoil and the newly formed government led by Evgenyi Yatsenyuk. The activity of the diplomatic community in Ukraine was therefore focused on Ukraine's integration agenda to the EU. National diplomats found different means to align their efforts to Ukraine's processes of implementing reforms under the AA and achieve its European aspirations. The Delegation in Kiev was also preoccupied with ongoing issues in the country and had closely followed all developments and progress made on reforms. In response to the crisis in Ukraine, the EU set up The Support Group for Ukraine to ensure that the support provided was focused and concentrated on the Association Agenda as well as providing additional strategic direction to already existing in country day-to-day donor coordination. The empirical findings further showed a practice of an institutionalised form of interaction between the EU and national diplomatic actors, including in their role as donors presented in Table 20 as a typology of a communication infrastructure. These meetings were coordinated by the Delegation that played a central role in their organisation as well as in embracing the task of representing the EU.

To assess relevance, evidence collected discussed corporate diplomatic practices in Ukraine in order to present the formulation and implementation of a common approach by the EU Delegation and member-state embassies. Even though national diplomats stated that, in practical terms, it was not clear what the common approach was, from the conduct of their diplomatic activity it resulted that the common approach was, for them, to have a common position on Ukraine. It was the common meetings that led the way to complementarity among all actors: the EU maintained different forms of dialogue with Ukraine, and in preparation to these dialogues, the MS were consulted by the Delegation on how to approach developments in different sectors. Findings showed that the common approach was best exercised in the HoMs meetings where EU ambassadors, after sharing information, wrote a joint report which was, thereafter, sent to Brussels. Several prominent examples of the

common approach were: the Cox-Kwasniewski mission; the Europe Days event and the Stronger Together campaign.

Empirical evidence also showed that there is a tendency to form group affiliations in the diplomatic community in Ukraine (presented in Table 20). The Visegrad group that includes Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, exhibited various examples of formulating a common approach, a lot of which was reflected through their public diplomacy activities. The Nordic group led on the matter of the 'good donorship' principle and the Baltic group that included Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia were jointly cooperating in formal and informal settings. Some member-states such as Germany or Austria, on the other hand, chose a "go-it-alone" approach and have been selective in their joint collaborations, preferring to cooperate on an ad-hoc basis. The "go-it-alone" approach was also common for Poland, which pursued a parallel national agenda in Ukraine with the most noticeable example of derogating from the common EU position on the issue of the Tymoshenko case.

An examination of the communication infrastructure, and of social and political capital, was performed in the final section of the chapter where evidence on the third criterion, capabilities, was presented. Despite instances of 'go-it-alone' strategy, findings showed that the communication infrastructure became the medium through which the common approach was taking place and was the main resource of the EU Delegation. This, in turn, made the Delegation become an information hub. National diplomats noticed that as result of being the main coordinator of these meetings, the EUD became more valued not only by MS but also by local actors. The diplomatic community also made use of the common encrypted system of sharing reports - AGORA and COREU network. Through this communication infrastructure, the Delegation offered a framework that fostered a good discussion and the added-value was that MS could provide their own input and share their know-how. Evidence further showed that the content of the meetings coordinated by the Delegation in Ukraine was aid-driven. Diplomats noted this on several occasions and that the EU delegation had a big Operations sections with vast development cooperation dossiers. An analysis of the work carried out by the Delegation also indicated that approximately 50 per cent of activity was seen as focused on operational activities and only approximately 15 per cent of the work was seen as related to the main

functions of traditional diplomacy. What became obvious during the fieldwork conducted in Ukraine, is that in terms of capabilities, the tensions between institutions in Brussels are reflected in the Delegation in Kiev. One tension referred to the 'turf war' within the EEAS – between people inside the EEAS and people from the national diplomatic service; a second tension was related to the relationship between the EEAS and the Delegation; and a third one echoed the inter-institutional dynamic between EEAS and certain DGs in the Commission, such as DG DevCo.

To sum up, in Ukraine, EU diplomatic performance has embraced post-Lisbon (2010-2015) certain positive dynamics as well as facing certain challenges. The latter, are not necessarily new developments, but already follow similar issues emphasised in the literature on EU performance in general: such as institutional path dependency, inter-institutional tensions or member-states forming groups of interest constellations. In Chapter 7 a thorough discussion of these findings will be conducted, also in light of the evidence presented on Moldova (chapter 4) and on Belarus (chapter 6).

Chapter 6. EU diplomatic performance in Belarus

Unlike Moldova or Ukraine, the relationship between Belarus and the EU followed a different path. In the early 90s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, both the EU and its member-states recognised the independence of Belarus and established diplomatic relations with their Eastern neighbour. The parties started the negotiation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) in 1995 which would represent the institutionalisation of the relations between EU and Belarus, yet the PCA was not ratified. After the 1996 referendum in Belarus that expanded the power of the President Lukashenko in an undemocratic manner, the development of relations between EU and Belarus were conditioned by the progress in the areas of democracy, respect of human rights, and the rule of law in Belarus. Thereafter, followed a period of isolation of Belarus by both the EU and the member-states and the EU's political relationship with Belarus became largely dominated by sanctions for the last two decades. The PCA has remained frozen since 1996 and 10 years later the EU presented a 'Non-Paper' comprising 12 points for essential reforms in Belarus with which the Lukashenko regime had to comply would become the reference document in the rapprochement of their relations (Commission, 2006). And, on the background of the growing Russia-Ukraine energy crisis in 2008 came the pragmatism of including Belarus into the EaP, conditioned by it fulfilling the EU demands. Full participation in the EaP was prevented due to the policies and actions pursued by the Belarussian authorities and it was only participating in the multilateral track.

In response to the release of prisoners, electoral code reforms and positive reforms in the independent media, the European Union temporarily suspended travel restrictions and in 2008 the Council reaffirmed its position on deepening relations with Belarus conditional on the country demonstrating more concrete steps on the path to democratization. The rapprochement in EU-Belarus relations was marked by the opening of the EU Delegation in Minsk in March 2008, initially as the Delegation of the European Commission to Belarus. After the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009 the Delegation officially represented the European Union and with the status of a fully-fledged diplomatic mission.

The diplomatic performance of the European Union in Belarus is discussed according to the three established criteria in the analytical framework: effectiveness, relevance and capability. This chapter presents, in a structured manner, the empirical evidence collected in relation to these criteria. The chapter starts with a brief overview of Belarus-EU relations and then, in the second section discusses the first criterion, effectiveness. As operationalised in Chapter 3, effectiveness is a criterion examined on two dimensions, one that explores the degree of democratic governance in Belarus and the other that investigates the diplomatic practices of representing the EU. How EU and member-state embassies cooperate in Belarus and contribute to formulating a common approach is discussed in the fourth section, that refers to the second criterion, relevance. Finally, the fifth section evaluates the communication infrastructure and the political and social capital present on the ground, hence discussing the evidence on the third criterion, capabilities. Overall, this chapter brings forward evidence collected during the field-work conducted in Belarus as well as the analysis based on the study of secondary sources (such as policy briefs, legislation, national and international reports as well as academic findings from scholarly literature on Belarus-EU). A discussion of these findings will be presented in the next chapter (7) that will clearly show the application of the three criteria that have been discussed in Chapter 3.

6.1. Background of EU-Belarus relations

A brief historical overview of the development of Belarus - EU relations, the attempts to institutionalise this relationship under the PCA, the ENP and leading to EaP respectively, as well as the development of the diplomatic representations of the EU and of member-states, is presented in this section.

6.1.1. From PCA to isolation

In its Foreign Policy Doctrine from 1993, Belarus prioritised its European direction, which led to the negotiation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with the EU in 1995. However, the PCA was not ratified and the development of relations between EU and Belarus was conditioned by the progress in the areas of democracy, respect of human rights, and the rule of law in Belarus (EU-Belarus, n.d.). The PCA was quickly ratified by the Belarusian parliament, but, after the 1996

referendum that allowed President Lukashenko to amend the constitution in a manner that undermined the constitutional role of the parliament and expanded the power of the presidency (meaning that the power was concentrated in the hands of one man), the EU ceased its relations with Belarus (Ioffe, 2011; Potocki, 2011; Korosteleva, 2012).

As result, the EU also paused the implementation of the TACIS programme for Belarus and the bilateral relationship froze, being regulated only by the TCA concluded with the Soviet Union in 1989 (Korosteleva, 2012). In 1997 the EU introduced its first sanctions against Belarusian authorities (above the rank of deputy minister) and limited assistance to projects that dealt with combating the effects of the Chernobyl disaster (Ioffe, 2011). The EU imposed the travel bans in response to the regime's effort to evict the diplomats of some member states from their residences in the Drazdy neighbourhood in Minsk in 1998 (Ditrych 2013). The reduced technical assistance to Belarus, which ranked among the countries receiving the smallest amount under TACIS, affected the movement of people and of information flow which became limited: as some indicated, by 2006, fewer than 1 in 20 Belarusians visited an EU country and by 2001 the state was controlling all domestic radio and television broadcasting (ibidem). While the relationship with EU was decreasing, there was a rapprochement with the East, mainly Russia, with whom Belarus signed a number of important bilateral agreements between 1995 and 1999 (Korosteleva, 2012). The latter secured Belarus several economic benefits that allowed Lukashenko to achieve sustainable growth, lower unemployment and secure wages and pensions (White et al., 2005). Belarus experienced such growth that, by 2005, it became the leader among ex-Soviet states with a GDP growth rate outpacing even its western neighbours (Potocki, 2011).

In 1999 Lukashenko was considering a rapprochement with the European Union and created an Intrastate Committee on participation in European integration; he also spoke strongly in favour of a 'multi-vector' foreign policy which reflected his frustration about the slow progress with the Russia–Belarus Union. However, the parliamentary elections in Belarus in October 2000 were widely criticised as undemocratic and non-transparent by the Troika, a shorthand term for the 3 international actors – the EU, the Council of Europe (CoE) and OSCE (Krivosheev, 2003; Korosteleva, 2012). After a CoE report uncovered the disappearance in 1999–

2000 of four Belarusians, including two politicians, a businessman and a cameraman, the EU issued a ban in 2004 on the Belarussian officials suspected of a crucial role in that disappearance from travelling to the EU; the ban was expanded in 2006, following another fraudulent presidential election, and for the first time, President Lukashenka himself was put on the EU blacklist (Ioffe, 2011; Ditych, 2013). And while Moldova and Ukraine have been included in the ENP and were offered Action Plans and technical assistance continuously from the very beginning, Belarus did not welcome the ENP. Due to the authoritarian regime of President Lukashenko, who ruled the country 'by decree' since 1994, Belarus was not offered an Action Plan and the EU conditioned the relationship on Belarus demonstrating its commitment to democracy, respect for the rule of law, good governance and the respect for human rights, including minority rights. Antidemocratic developments and human rights violations led the EU withdrawing Belarus (despite initial opposition from some central European member states) from the EU's generalised scheme of preferences (GSP) as a response to its failure to comply with International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions (Ditych, 2013).

6.1.2. From isolation to EaP

The PCA has remained frozen since 1996 and 10 years later the EU presented a 'Non-Paper' that comprised 12 points for essential reforms in Belarus to which the Lukashenko regime had to comply (Commission, 2006b). According to the 12 points, Belarus was expected to take measures aimed at democratisation which included, inter alia, transparent elections, freedom of expression and association and release of political prisoners (ibidem). Without having a PCA in place or an Action Plan, as in the case of Moldova and Ukraine, the 12-points represented the reference point in EU-Belarus relations and the first form of institutionalisation of their bilateral relations. In 2008, Lukashenko publicly acknowledged that the EU demands had been heard and the Belarussian authorities took the decision to release the political prisoners (Vieira, 2013). After pursuing a policy of isolation (but occasionally maintaining trade relations) and then adopting several restrictive measures towards the undemocratic leader of Belarus, the EU was 'ready to deepen its relations with Belarus' (EEAS, 2011) with the opening in 2008 of an EU Delegation in Minsk and in 2009 inclusion of Belarus in EaP activities. This was considered as a step forward in

unfreezing EU-Belarus relations and according to some, “marked the peak of the EU’s policy of ‘pragmatic engagement’ with Lukashenka” (ODB, 2012).

The relationship with Belarus was built by the EU based upon adopting European values through political, social and economic reform that would, in turn, allow the building of regional security, stability and prosperity (Commission, 2006b). While these values were central in European political rhetoric and represented key elements in the ENP and EaP (Belarus is a participant in the latter), research highlighted that the “security threats emanating from Belarus” have been a central theme in the reinvigoration of relations with Belarus (Bosse, 2009, p.217). At the moment of launching the ENP, the EU was hesitant about engaging with Belarus and hence sending ‘a signal of support for policies which do not conform to EU values’ (Commission, 2003), but stressed that Belarus could become an ENP member as soon as it had fulfilled the previous EU requirements on committing to democracy, good governance and respect for human rights. It was the policies pursued by the Lukashenko regime that made the EU pursue limited cooperation with Belarus in the framework of the ENP with all funded programmes aiming at supporting civil society and benefitting the people of Belarus (Commission, 2005). A major tool for promoting its values was through supporting civil society (CS), independent media, offering humanitarian assistance and therefore achieving democratization. Assistance on this dimension came through the ENPI, however as scholars noted, “major projects aim to improve border management” (Bosse, 2009, p.221). Nonetheless, these were seen as positive steps in bilateral cooperation that opened up the possibility for sector-specific cooperation in Belarus and, on the background of the growing Russia-Belarus energy crisis in 2008, the pragmatism of including it into the EaP was welcomed by both parties (Vieira, 2013).

In response to the release of prisoners, electoral code reforms and positive reforms in the independent media, the European temporarily suspended travel restrictions on some officials and encouraged the intensification of technical cooperation with Belarus (European Council, 2008). The Council thereafter reaffirmed its position on deepening relations with Belarus conditioned by the country demonstrating more concrete steps on the path to democratization (European Council, 2009). In May 2009, Belarus joined the Eastern Partnership initiative and participated mostly in the multilateral track of the EaP, with the only bilateral track being the Visa-Facilitation

and Readmission Agreement negotiations. Full participation in the EaP was prevented due to the policies and actions pursued by the Belarusian authorities and restrictive measures were imposed by the EU in 2004, 2006, 2010 and 2012 in connection with human rights violations and crackdowns on peaceful demonstrators (European Parliament, 2016). Belarusian representatives, thus, took part in the activities of all four multilateral EaP platforms: “Democracy, Good Governance and Stability”, “Economic Integration and Approximation with EU Sectoral Policies”, “Energy Security” and “Contacts between People”, but were excluded from the bilateral track. As a result, by 2010, Belarus was participating in more than 30 EU projects and programmes on a bilateral and regional level (Potocki, 2011).

6.1.3. EU and MS diplomatic representations in Minsk

The overview of the EU diplomatic network in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus presented in Table 5 (Chapter 2) showed that in Belarus, by 2015, there were 15 national embassies and the Union Delegation present in Minsk. As Table 22 below shows, the embassies with the biggest numbers of personnel were those representing Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, Italy and the Czech Republic. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the largest numbers within the biggest embassies were employed in the counsellor section: for example, there were only 5 diplomats dealing with political and economic affairs and press relations in the Italian embassy (out of 11), 4 diplomats dealing with political and economic relations in the Hungarian embassy (out of 12) and 5 in the Latvian representation (out of 11). This is to say, that in terms of diplomatic personnel, most embassies varied between small and medium-sized; and diplomats in national embassies and the Delegation noted that the community of diplomats dealing with political and economic affairs in Minsk was rather small (interv. 33, 34).

The EU Delegation opened in Minsk in March 2008 as the Delegation of the European Commission to Belarus and after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009 was officially renamed as the Delegation of the European Union to Belarus with the status of a diplomatic mission and officially representing the European Union. The EUD in Minsk was also considered small by the diplomatic community and by the staff in the Delegation (interv. 33, 34, 37). While data in the

table below indicates a number of 13 people in the EU Delegation in Minsk, this only refers to the data shown on the Delegation's website in 2014.

Table 22. National and EU diplomatic missions in Belarus: 2015			
Embassy/Delegation		No. of diplomatic staff⁵⁴	Size
EU member-state embassies	Austria*	n/a	small
	Bulgaria	4	small
	Czech Republic	10	large
	Estonia	2	small
	France	4	small
	Germany	6**	medium
	Hungary	12	large
	Italy	11	large
	Latvia	11	large
	Lithuania	16	large
	Poland	6	medium
	Romania	2	small
	Slovakia	5	medium
	Sweden	3	small
United Kingdom	n/a	n/a	
EU	EU	13***	large
Total	16		
<i>Notes:</i>			
*Austria had only an office of the embassy in Belarus with a resident ambassador; a fully-fledged embassy opened in the end of 2015			
**this number accounts only for the post of the ambassador and the Head of the 5 departments within the embassy			
***this data reflects the information collected during the fieldwork in Minsk in 2014, an update can be seen in Table 23 below			
<i>Source:</i> Data compiled by the author in 2014 and updated in 2015 based on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus and the webpages of the national embassies			

As Table 23 below indicates, the Delegation has employed towards 2015 a total of 27 members of staff and, indeed, in comparison to the other two Delegations (in Chisinau and Kiev), the one in Belarus was numerically the smallest (see Table 6, Chapter 2).

⁵⁴ In this table the number of diplomatic staff reflects solely to the national diplomats accredited in the host-country and does not reflect the total number of employees of the embassy or delegation.

Table 23. Distribution of EEAS and Commission staff in the EU Delegation in Belarus, 2015			
EU Delegation in Minsk	Staff		
	Commission	EEAS	Total
	17	10	27

Source: Data withdrawn from Bicchi & Maurer (2018), Table 2, page 16 (staff numbers have been provided to the authors by EEAS staff in March, 2016)

Given the specific background of relations between the EU and Belarus presented at the beginning of this chapter, the mandate of the Delegation was mainly focused on two directions: one of establishing a dialogue with the Belorussian authorities and other stakeholders (civil society organisations, universities, local media) on economic, social, governance, human rights and other policy issues, and developing and maintaining contacts with them (including representatives of the business community); and the second one on explaining the European Union position to national authorities in Belarus and raising awareness about the EU, its institutions and programs implemented in Belarus within the framework of the ENPI (Delegation, 2010). Also, one of the core tasks of the Delegation was to support the preparation and implementation of the technical assistance programs financed by the EU (ibidem). The Delegation also operated in close cooperation with the National Coordinating Unit which was established by the Belarusian Government in 1992 (to assist with the programming and implementation of the EU technical assistance through the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus). In 1997, with the assistance of the European Commission, this became the TACIS National Coordinating Unit in order to manage the EU Tacis Programme in Belarus (Coordinating Unit, 2014). The priority areas within these programmes referred to sustainable economic growth, energy efficiency, environmental protection and improving living standards in Belarus (ibidem).

Although Belarus was not one of the neighbouring countries included in the ENP, the EU offered financial assistance via the technical assistance programme implemented by the European Commission to help members of the CIS, including Belarus, to transition to democratic market-oriented economies. Altogether, between 1991 and 2006, Belarus received €229 million (Table 24); this volume of EU technical assistance to Belarus represented more than 40% of all the technical assistance provided to Belarus, which made the EU the single largest donor of assistance to this

country in 2006 (Delegation, 2010). Due to political developments in the country, in 1997, EU suspended cooperation with the Belarusian authorities in the absence of convincing efforts to proceed with the necessary democratic reforms and offered Belarus assistance in two specific areas: human rights protection and freedom of the media in the process of democratization (European Council, 1997). Afterwards, the 1997 General Affairs Council conclusions on Belarus were updated by the November 2004 and November 2005 GAERC conclusions which stated that EU assistance would seek to “promote shared democratic values between the people of the EU and Belarus by intensifying people-to-people contacts and by strengthening good neighbourly relations across borders (e.g. through student and scientific exchanges, scholarships, youth travel, contacts between small- and medium-sized enterprises, training local authority officials, etc.)” (NIP Belarus, 2007-2013, p.16). Since 2007, Belarus was part of the ENPI instrument through which the country was allocated initially €20 million for the period 2007-2010 with two priority areas - “Social and Economic Development” and “Democratic Development and Good Governance” - and with a 70% - 30% distribution between these. Following the positive developments in EU-Belarus relations in 2008, the overall allocation was increased to €30 million (ibidem). With the launch of the EaP, there was a wide range of instruments in use for projects in Belarus and up to 2013, the EU’s support increased to €281 million as can be seen in Table 24 below.

Table 24: EU financial aid to Belarus 1991-2014 (indicative amounts)	
	Total amount (million euro)
TACIS (1991–2004)	221
TACIS (2005-2006)	8
ENPI (2007–2013)	281
ENI (for 2014- 2017)*	71-89
Note: *this is an indicative allocation based on the EEAS Strategy Paper for Belarus 2014-2017	
Source: authors' compilation of data from NIP Belarus (2007–2013), Strategy Paper and Multiannual Indicative Programme for EU support to Belarus 2014-2017 (Commission, 2014; NIP Belarus 2007-2013)	

The negotiations for opening the Delegation of the European Commission took place over 3 years and in 2008, the decision regarding the opening of the Commission’s Delegation went hand in hand with the sudden release of six internationally

recognised political prisoners (Guedes Vieira, 2008). This was considered as a rapprochement in the EU-Belarus relations with a nuanced pragmatism on both sides: for Belarus this meant an alternative to its relationship with Russia and for the EU a direct channel of communication between Belarus authorities and Brussels (more details in section 6.2.2.). Until 2013, the Delegation worked according to the stipulations of the National Indicative Programme for Belarus for 2007-2013 and the Country Strategy Paper for 2007-2010. Accordingly, EU assistance to Belarus was concentrated mainly on the areas of food safety, energy, environment, higher education, as well as on civil society, media and the social domain. Part of the Union's assistance focused on the areas of Belarus which were affected by the Chernobyl disaster and on measures of nuclear safety. In addition, with EU support, Belarus was involved in regional and cross-border cooperation projects: Poland-Belarus-Ukraine, Latvia-Lithuania-Belarus and the Baltic Sea Region (Delegation, 2010). The Delegation also engaged in some generic public diplomacy activities which were very basic: information posted on the Delegation's website, maintaining of newsletters, publications and brochures about the European Union and about EU-Belarus relations. Journalists could subscribe to the Delegation's mailing list and regularly receive EU news including a weekly EU newsletter and a biweekly EU-Belarus Cooperation Newsletter (*ibidem*).

Field-work conducted in Belarus in 2014 showed that the diplomatic activity in this part of Eastern Europe focused on creating contacts and building bridges between the two countries (interv. 35) with the most important areas being trade and public diplomacy (as can be seen in section 6.2.2.). Given the period of isolation of relations between the EU and MS and Belarus, the conduct of diplomacy became more active from 2008 onwards and the substance of the diplomatic practice concentrated on the main functions of diplomacy – representation, negotiation and communication. The function of representation was mostly focused through embassies focusing on representing their member-states and the policies of their country in Belarus as well as understanding and reporting to their capitals on the policy of the Belarusian government; that of negotiation – on negotiating different agreements such as the one regarding the creation of the Latvian-Belarusian Intergovernmental Commission on Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation; and communication, which implied exchange of communications, issuing of press

releases, conducting press conferences, seminars and press briefings (interv. 33, 34, 35, 36, 37; Embassy LITH, 2014). The way the traditional forms of the conduct of diplomacy further developed in Belarus is discussed in section 6.2.2.

6.2. Effectiveness: sustainability of ENP goals

As in the cases of Moldova and Ukraine, a discussion of effectiveness, the first criterion operationalised in the analytical framework of this thesis, is carried out in relation to goal attainment that is assessed on two dimensions. In the first section, the EaP is a reference point in order to examine the level of alignment of Belarus to EU rules and norms. As explained in the previous section, Belarus, although part of the ENP, was not offered an Action Plan, which is the EU's roadmap for reforms for its Eastern neighbours; it was however included in the EaP and the bilateral relationship was conditioned by the commitment of Belarus to democratization of the country. In the second section, the reference point is the Lisbon Treaty that upgraded the Commission representations to Union Delegation that are tasked to represent the EU in third countries. After a discussion about the role of national embassies and the EU delegation in relation to sustainability of ENP goals in Belarus, the focus is shifted to exploring how the Delegation in Minsk embraced the function of diplomatic representation.

6.2.1. Level of adaptation/alignment to EU rules & norms

The Eastern Partnership aimed at building a common area of shared democracy, prosperity, stability and increased cooperation for EaP countries, including Belarus. Multilateral cooperation under the EaP, in which Belarus took part, involved the EU institutions, the member-states and the 6 EaP partner countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. It took place across a wide array of issues, ranging from democracy, good governance and stability to economic issues, energy security and contacts between people; guided by four thematic platforms, supported by various expert panels, flagship initiatives and projects (EEAS, 2014).

Belarus showed the poorest scores on all dimensions of cooperation due to its low level of alignment to EU rules and norms as Table 25 below shows. The quality of

governance in Belarus exhibited lack of professionalism and impartiality; while some of the EaP countries were developing institutions for policy formulation and coordination with the EU with detailed procedures for processing and evaluating policies, Belarus was lacking, for instance, bodies to coordinate cross-sectoral policies (EaP Index, 2011). Given the fact that Belarus suffered from a monopolised legislature, in terms of elections it did not meet the standard of democratic elections, which reflected the weak rights and capacities of the legislature in relation to the executive branch: “the legislature in Belarus lacks any rights that might ensure it and its members some institutional independence, and its president can even appoint a share of the members of the Savet Respubliki at his discretion” (ibidem, p. 23). In 2013-2014, Belarus continued to demonstrate the biggest failings in ensuring fair, free and transparent electoral campaigns and remained the least committed to reaching democratic election standards. (EaP Index, 2014).

Table 25. Approximation rate of EaP countries to the EU: Belarus						
<i>*approximation indices (1=best performer; 0=worst performer)</i>						
Sector cooperation	Moldova	Georgia	Ukraine	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Belarus
Deep and sustainable democracy	0.76	0.73	0.61	0.61	0.29	0.27
Independent judiciary	0.83	0.88	0.47	0.73	0.27	0.24
Freedom, Security and Justice	0.99	0.90	0.86	0.64	0.60	0.42

Source: Author's compilation based on EaP Index 2014

Two years after participating in EaP activities, the human rights situation in Belarus was continuing to deteriorate (Freedom House, 2012). This was a deterioration in the aftermath of the presidential elections in December 2010 (won by Lukashenko) that followed demonstrations which were violently repressed by the government. In contrast, prior to the 2010 elections, the Belarusian authorities allowed some independent civil society activity: fewer political activists were imprisoned on political grounds, and (pro-Western) civil society started to cooperate under the umbrella of the EU's EaP Civil Society Forum (Bosse, 2012). In 2011-2012, travel bans were imposed on 243 individuals and the assets of 32 entities were frozen; also an arms embargo and a ban on the export of equipment that could be used for internal repression were initiated. The EU also promised to quadruple funding for civil society projects in Belarus and secured the adoption of a Human Rights Council resolution

on the domestic situation of the country (Ditrych, 2013). In 2014, according to the Freedom House report, Belarus was included on the list of most repressive countries in the world (Freedom House, 2014); and its human rights record qualified it as a 'black hole' on the European map (European Parliament, 2016).

Although Belarus was the first EaP partner country to submit over 20 project related to the issues of energy, transport and transit as well as border management and infrastructure (Korosteleva 2012), its progress of reforms remained low. Belarus retained and implemented the death penalty, and torture remained a broadly used mechanism on prisoners; there was no effective judicial control and the authorities exercised a complicated system of legislation in relation to NGOs that allowed them to criminally prosecute civil society leaders. Furthermore, in 2012, Belarus imposed a ban on leaving the country on a number of prominent opposition leaders and civil society activists (NIP Belarus 2007-2013; EaP Index, 2014, European Parliament, 2016). And while NGOs in Belarus contributed to policy formulation, their opinion was not taken into account and civil society had limited possibilities to play a role in providing checks and balances on government power (ibidem). Furthermore, in December 2014, amendments made to the Law on Mass Media in Belarus were adopted without public debate; these allowed the Ministry of Communication to block public access to websites without a judicial review (European Parliament, 2016).

Still, some improvements in EU-Belarus relations took place after 2013: Belarus participated in the EaP Vilnius Summit in November 2013, ratified the readmission agreements with Russia and Kazakhstan and declared its readiness to start EU visa-liberalization negotiations (Astapenia, 2013). A key component of the EaP is mobility of the citizens of the EU Eastern partner countries in a secure environment, provided through visa facilitation agreements, and the development of rules for managing the return of irregular migrants through readmission agreements (Commission, 2015e). In June 2014, the EU and the Republic of Belarus started to negotiate visa facilitation and readmission agreements and launched negotiations on the Mobility Partnership in 2015 (Commission, 2015e; European Parliament, 2016). The latter offers the most complete framework for bilateral cooperation between the EU and its partners, based on mutual offers of commitments and project initiatives covering mobility, migration and asylum issues (European Commission, 2015e). This was possible due to the previous cooperation on border management issues

between the EU and Belarus. As mentioned in the previous section, a series of large-scale projects were carried out with EU financial help: 26 border management projects were implemented in Belarus from 1999 to 2014 (Yakouchyk & Schmid, 2016). Cross-Border Cooperation initiatives, such as the Latvia–Lithuania–Belarus programme, implied not just strengthening the surveillance capacity of the border, but also numerous initiatives aimed to create and enhance people-to-people contacts in the border regions (*ibidem*).

Empirical evidence shows that cooperation among politicians was not as intense as in technical sectors, where contacts among officials between Brussels and Minsk deepened. A working arrangement between FRONTEX and the Belarusian State Border Committee was initiated in this time-frame, and the EU and Belarus maintained a policy dialogue on customs, integrated border management and law enforcement, as well as combating illegal migration and smuggling (Frontex, 2009; Bakowski, 2012). Some commentators have emphasized that Belarusian authorities were eager to learn European practical solutions to existing problems, especially because in addition to the purely technical training sessions, occasional anti-corruption training sessions for border management officials from Belarus were organised (Yakouchyk & Schmid, 2016).

Furthermore, according to the EaP Index, in 2014, Belarus showed most progress when it came to improving the quality of public administration, which is a precondition for the implementation of effective, sustainable reform in different sectors in any country (EaP Index, 2014). And, since 2015, legislation in Belarus has allowed for civil society participation in drafting legislation in the fields of entrepreneurship, the environment, youth, and social policy (EaP Index, 2015). In the area of market economy, and especially the quality of the business climate, Belarus has been the leader among EaP countries in terms of ease of resolving insolvency issues, and made progress so that businesses can be established quickly, both in terms of time and monetary costs, thus allowing free entry to the market, and offered the strongest guarantees for contract enforcement (EaP Index, 2014; EaP Index, 2015).

Certain positive developments in the area of human rights were seen in the summer of 2015 when the EU and Belarus held a dialogue on human rights in Brussels

where discussions centred on a range of issues, including the establishment of a National Human Rights Institution, freedom of expression, assembly and association, the death penalty and the fight against torture and ill-treatment as well as children's rights (EEAS, 2015b). According to the press release released by the EEAS on this subject, the talks demonstrated the commitment of the EU and Belarus to deepen their relations in the area of human rights, followed by discussion on building trust, promoting reforms and developing cooperation (ibidem). The release of 6 political prisoners by President Lukashenko in August 2015, including Mikola Statkevich, his opponent in the presidential election from 2010, was greeted by EU HR/VP, Federica Mogherini and Commissioner for ENP and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes Hahn as 'a long-sought step forward' and was seen as important progress in the improvement of relations between Belarus and EU (EEAS, 2015c). As result, in October 2015, the EU temporarily lifted sanctions on Lukashenko, 169 other Belarusian officials and three entities (European Parliament, 2016). The progress in improvement of relations led to Belarus hosting peace talks on Ukraine in Minsk in 2015; this was the first time since 1941 and 1973 that German and French leaders set foot in Minsk (Gubarevich, 2015).

6.2.2. The role of diplomatic actors in Kiev

As presented in this chapter earlier, the diplomatic activity of both the member-states and the EU Delegation was focused mainly on representation, negotiation and communication. According to national diplomats, their activity in Belarus was about the development of bilateral relations and 'spreading good ideas, in this type of country this is very important' (interv. 34); and about building relations and bridges (political, economic, cultural) between the countries (interv. 35). In their daily activity, diplomats explained that the exchange of ideas was key in order to understand and report on Belarusian government policies as well as to understand the differences and agreements between the two countries and protect and promote their national interests (interv. 36). Furthermore, diplomacy was used as means of solving both positive and negative issues in inter-state relations, especially since a function of diplomacy is to identify solutions (interv. 37). For EU diplomats, their diplomacy was guided by a similar narrative to that of the national diplomats; the conduct of EU diplomacy in Belarus was "about establishing and developing of bi- and multilateral

ties in maximum amount of sectors and issues through using several instruments and tools: personal contacts, engagement with authorities and communication” (interv. 33).

Due the nature of the overall EU-Belarus relationship, which went through a period of isolation, diplomatic relations were also kept to a minimum. An increase in interaction can be seen since 2008 and especially after Belarus became part of the EaP; this was also a period when several MS established fully-fledged embassies in Belarus in parallel to the opening of the Commission representation in 2008. Although the activity of the diplomatic community in Belarus followed traditional diplomacy, MS embassies and the Delegation channelled their bilateral interaction with Belarus in a manner that supported Belarus’ democratisation progress within the EaP framework. This can be seen in the priorities that the embassies stated on their web-pages: for example, the Czech embassy was mandated to develop the bilateral relationship with the Republic of Belarus while respecting internationally recognized values in the area of democracy and human rights; to search for export, investment and privatization opportunities in Belarus, and to provide assistance to Czech companies in establishing contacts in Belarus; to promote Czech culture, development of Czech-Belarusian cultural exchange and provide consular services for citizens of the Czech Republic (Embassy CZ, 2015). At the same time its priorities in Belarus referred to supporting active Belarus membership in the Eastern Partnership and active support for civil society (ibidem).

German-Belarusian relations developed at first positively with diplomatic relations developing after 1992: the German embassy was among the first to open in Minsk in 1992 (MFA Belarus, 2015), and until the mid-1990s mutual visits were actively carried out and numerous ministerial meetings were held on both sides. In 1997 when the Council introduced its first sanctions against Belarusian authorities, the German Bundestag and the Federal Government repeatedly called on Belarus to progress in the field of democracy and with no progress from Belarus, it led to the restriction of political relations. A rapprochement in relations started in 2008 and was interrupted after the presidential elections in December 2010, when Germany criticized the Belarusian authorities for use of force by the authorities against demonstrators and representatives of civil society and the imprisonment of 30

demonstrators (MFA Germany, 2015). These events had an impact not only on the process of democratization and rapprochement with Germany, but also with the EU. The progress in improvement of relations since 2013, as evidence showed earlier, led to Belarus hosting peace talks on Ukraine in Minsk in 2015, when German leaders, such as Angela Merkel visited Minsk; a visit at such a high level for the first time since the visit of Adolph Hitler in 1941. This visit was followed by other high-level visits at the level of ministers (Embassy Germany, 2015).

The Baltic states developed their relationship with Belarus as early as 1991. Latvia, for example, signed a Declaration on Principles of Good-Neighbourly Relations in 1991 and opened its embassy in Minsk in 1993 (MFA Latvia, 2015). There was active cooperation among countries in economic, in particular transit, cross-border, cultural, educational and scientific, border control and management, environmental protection, cooperation between municipalities and people-to-people contacts fields. For Latvia, it was important to develop Belarus as a democratic, economically and socially stable country with respect for human rights and the rule of law, especially because it is its neighbour. A number of high-level visits, including at the level of prime-ministers took place starting in 1994, and then in 1995 and in 2009, with the highest number of working visits at ministerial level taking place between 2013 and 2015 (ibidem). In contrast, diplomatic relations between Estonia and Belarus were established in 1992 and in 1995 Estonia opened a General Consulate in Minsk. The Estonian embassy, however, was established only in 2009 (Embassy Estonia, 2015). The first high-level visits to Minsk and Tallinn, respectively, took place as soon as the embassy was established with visits at the level of ministers taking place in 2009, 2013 and 2014. Also, in 2015 parliamentary cooperation between the two countries was established. These high-level visits were working visits in sector cooperation areas such as agriculture, forestry but also culture (ibidem).

In 2015, Austria was the last member-state, in the timeframe of this thesis, that opened a fully-fledged embassy in Minsk, even if it had already recognised the independence of the former Soviet Union states, including Belarus, in 1992. The diplomatic relationship with Belarus increased in parallel with the improvement in relations between Belarus and the EU and since 2013, the bilateral exchange of visits became more active at the political level (Embassy of Austria, 2015). Austria

had maintained diplomatic relations with Belarus from its embassy in Moscow and only at the end of 2013 established an Austrian Honorary Consulate as result of the growth of Austrian investments in Belarus (ibidem). According to the Austrian ambassador, “embedded in the EU, together with our EU partners, we work to consistently shape EU-Belarus relations based on shared values and interests” (Bayerl, 2015). The visits of high-level Austrian officials to Belarus took place in 2015 when issues of regional and international cooperation were discussed and the parties agreed on a series of steps to deepen cooperation between the two countries and to intensify the dialogue between Belarus and the European Union (ibidem).

The mandate of the EU Delegation post-Lisbon was focused along similar lines to those pursued by the Commission representation. The Delegation was tasked with establishing a dialogue with the Belorussian authorities and other stakeholders (civil society organisations, universities, local media) on economic, social, governance, human rights and other policy issues and develop and maintain contacts with them. Also, the Delegation was mandated to represent the Union; this meant, on a daily basis, explaining the European Union position to national authorities in Belarus and raising awareness about the EU, its institutions and programs implemented in Belarus within the framework of the ENPI (Delegation, 2015). EU financial assistance, presented in Table 24, focused on supporting the needs of the population and democratisation in priority areas such as social inclusion, regional and local development. Bilateral assistance to Belarus was, since the EaP, complemented by thematic and regional programmes in the following fields: education (Tempus, Erasmus Mundus), the eradication of landmines, waste governance, air quality, nuclear safety - Chernobyl, and TAIEX; and special additional financial measures were allocated for support to civil society (interv. 33). Already in March 2012, a European Dialogue on Modernization with Belarusian society was launched that involved, via specific projects, over 747 non-governmental organizations alone who engaged in EU-level activities (Korosteleva, 2016). In 2013, for example, through the Dialogue two new programmes for Belarus were initiated: BELMED, supporting reforms in the health care system (€8 million), and RELOAD-2, offering support for regional and local development in two regions – Grodno and Minsk (€3.5 million) (ibidem).

As a result of Belarus' participation in the EaP, member-states also oriented their diplomatic work towards supporting non-governmental organisations. The embassy of the UK emphasized in 2014 that they encouraged Belarus' full participation as a member of the Eastern Partnership and worked on providing support for improving the situation in the areas of human rights and the rule of law (Embassy UK, 2014). Germany established a German-Belarusian joint venture in Minsk (in 1994) through which a variety of intercultural work in the field of education was undertaken; and civil society contacts were developed in areas such as history, media, environment and social aspects; all of which contributed to the formation of democratic structures and enhancement of the rule of law (Embassy Germany, 2015). France also reiterated its dedication to Belarus's progress in respect of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It established the Franco-Belorussian Center for European Studies - a joint project of the French Embassy in Belarus and the University of Bordeaux – that offered training in social sciences and law for students (those who completed the courses offered at the Center obtained diplomas awarded by the University of Bordeaux) (Embassy France, 2015).

The Czech Republic organised a series of seminars in order to familiarize Belarusian teachers and researchers with the Czech experience in the area of education and media education. The seminars were a result of the cooperation between the Czech Association for International Affairs and the Belarusian National Institute for Education. The Czech Embassy in Minsk was also involved in supporting art in Belarus and, in 2014, held a ceremonial presentation of medals and honours awarded to Belarusian children at the 42nd International Children's Art Exhibition in Lidice (Embassy CZ, 2015). The Embassy of Latvia in Minsk and its consulate in Vitebsk were involved in organizing exhibitions, concerts, college exchange visits, and stimulating work in the field of cultural communication. For example, from 2014, the Latvian-Belarus Cooperation Program in Science and Technology was implemented, allowing the development of 6 scientific and technical cooperation projects with a total funding of €256 552 (Embassy Latvia, 2015).

Estonia conducted bilateral projects mainly through the Estonian Center for Eastern Partnership that offered seminars and trainings for representatives of Belarusian civil society organizations, covering various areas of the reform of public administration for example. At the same time, several Estonian non-profit organizations carried out

various projects in Belarus, in fields such as entrepreneurship education or the development of the involvement of citizens. From 2002, Estonia organized seminars and supported the organization of conferences for Belarussians. For example, in 2008, 2011 and 2012, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia supported the organization of Belarusian diaspora congresses in Tallinn (Embassy Estonia, 2015). The Estonian Development Cooperation Plan for Belarus budgeted €249,740 in 2013 and €241,242 for 2015 and stipulated that Belarus would remain a long-term priority partner country until at least 2020 (ibidem).

In 2014, Lithuania prioritised developing business cooperation and organised events for the business community in Belarus. Such events were organized at the embassy's initiative, with the active participation of the Lithuanian Business Club in Belarus, the Belarusian European Business Association and the Business Council of Lithuania and Belarus. Such events, were considered by the Lithuanian ambassador as an opportunity for the representatives of the business community to share their views on business cooperation between Lithuania, Belarus and the EU, and the influence of regional factors on economic cooperation. Furthermore, at the initiative of the Lithuanian-Belarusian Economic Cooperation Council and the Lithuanian Business Club, a number of events were organized for both trade and investment cooperation and transport, logistics, tourism, innovation and agriculture; activities coordinated by the Commercial Attaché of the embassy. The Lithuanian Business Club in Belarus had about 50 Lithuanian companies and Lithuanian businessmen operating in Belarus as members (Embassy of Lithuania, 2014). In 2015, the embassy of Lithuania carried out projects on the social and economic activity of women and networking between the EU and Eastern Europe which were dedicated to promoting women's entrepreneurship and social and economic activity.

One national diplomat emphasized that despite their different bilateral projects carried out in Belarus, their diplomatic views were the same at national and EU level (interv. 37). On the ground, the activity of the diplomatic community was carried out within the EU framework, where discussions took place on developments in Belarus as well as cooperation among member-states (interv. 33, 34, 35, 36, 37). As findings showed, in practice, there were several working groups created by the EU Delegation in Minsk: on Assistance and cooperation, on Schengen, on Sanctions, on economic relations and on human rights (interv. 33). Table 26 below shows a

categorization of the institutionalized forms of interactions between the EU and national diplomatic actors that represented the beginnings of a centralized communication infrastructure led by the EUD.

Typology	Heading	Frequency	Description
Level	<i>General EU–member states meetings</i>		
	(1) HoMs: Meetings of Heads of Delegation (HoDs)	<i>Information not disclosed</i>	reflects the diplomatic ranking of the attendees
	(2) Counsellor’s meetings		
Topic	(1) Thematic EU meetings		have a specific agenda and are narrow in scope; are taking place on the following themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assistance and cooperation - Sanctions - Schengen issues - Economic counsellors issues - Political (and Human Rights) issues
Group affiliation	<i>EU meetings within regional frameworks of cooperation</i>		
	(1) Visegrad Group (or V4)	<i>Information not disclosed</i>	Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia
	(2) Nordic Group (or Nordic Plus)		Sweden, Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands, Ireland, the UK
<i>Source: Author’s compilation based on fieldwork conducted in Belarus in 2014</i>			

The EU Delegation created several working groups where diplomats regularly met. The HoMs meetings took place at the level of Heads of delegations while participants in the Counsellor’s meetings were counsellors responsible of specific dossiers such as economy or human rights, for example. Out of the thematic meetings, the oldest one was the Schengen one (established in 2010). Within this group, post-Lisbon, participants noticed an extremely tight cooperation: “it achieved several goals, now there is a visa list of common supporting documents, there is a harmonized approach to issuing visas, it follows the recommendations of the Council and there are proper statistics in place” (interv. 33). The meetings of the Heads of Delegations (HoMs) represented as well a united group that worked in a challenging

environment. The meetings on sanctions reviewed the sanction list for Belarus. The group on human rights was fairly new, it started its activity in 2012 and “focuses on solidarity, an increased approach on events happening in the country, including the issue of political prisoners” (interv. 33). The most recently established group was that of the economic counsellors, created in June 2014, which held its first meeting in November 2014.

A discussion on the way in which diplomats engage in Minsk on formulating and implementing a common approach (i.e. discussion on relevance) is carried out in section 6.4. while empirical evidence regarding diplomatic capabilities is discussed in section 6.5. The following section will briefly account for the diplomatic practices present in Minsk in relation to representing the European Union in Belarus, as prescribed in the Lisbon Treaty and presented in the operationalisation section of this thesis in relation to effectiveness.

6.3. Effectiveness: representing the Union

The upgrade from Commission representation to Union delegation in third countries, according to the Council note 17770/1/09, meant that the latter took over the responsibility for representation of the Union and was expected to act in close cooperation with member-states. In Minsk, this meant that the functions of the rotating Presidency became the responsibility of the Union Delegation; this brought, according to the staff in the Delegation “more formalization, centralization of meetings, agendas, organisation of follow-up meetings and initiatives” (interv. 33). National diplomats emphasized that the change was valuable for the diplomatic community through the regular meetings and exchange of information that was happening on the ground (interv. 35). For national embassies, the Lisbon Treaty changes did not influence their work to a large extent, because it was more work for the Delegation in coordinate the community (interv. 34, 37). Some even compared the work done by the Commission representation and that of the Delegation, emphasizing that under the Commission representation the relationship between embassies and the representation was described as a teacher-pupil one whereas with the Delegation there was more learning and socializing (interv. 37).

EU diplomats emphasized that in Minsk, the role of the Delegation was to be at the service of the member-states – organizing meeting, writing reports, delivering information - which was appreciated by the member-states (interv. 33). National diplomats put emphasis on this role of the Delegation, especially because “the Delegation is a central point for all member-states; it is not a referee or a mission that tries to impose, it is the voice that gets the best dialogue in terms of results vis-à-vis local authorities through a cooperation of member-states, through common decisions” (interv. 37). With the disappearance of the role for national embassies in chairing and organizing meetings as the Presidency, the role in coordinating all EU actors on the ground and creating different working groups became the Delegation’s responsibility. In practice, this implied less work for the embassies and a stronger lead for the Delegation, hence more centralization. As the EU diplomat explained, “it is the Delegation’s focus on making it functional” (interv. 33). Even though the Delegation’s capability was still in continuous formation, member-states were engaged in order to increase their activity in Minsk. Member-states particularly highlighted the high degree of transparency in information-exchange coming from the Delegation in Minsk even in the cases when some diplomats could not attend the meetings, and that the Delegation tried to organize all meetings in such a way that all could participate (interv. 37).

Given the development of EU-Belarus relations starting from 2008 onwards, both EU and national diplomats stated that the effects of the Lisbon Treaty changes had not been felt in Minsk as they were in other third countries (interv. 33, 34, 36, 37). The first obvious change was the absence of the rotating Presidency which brought more centralization and formalization of the cooperation in the hands of the Delegation (interv. 33). The fact that there were regular meetings and exchange of information was a valued change; however, what national diplomats also noted was the fact that in these meetings a lot of time was spent on clarifying what the diplomatic community wanted to achieve in Belarus (interv. 35). For some, the fact that member-states, especially the newcomers to the EU club, no longer had the opportunity to be in the ‘shoes of the Presidency’ represented a negative effect of the Lisbon Treaty changes for third countries like Belarus; this was because national diplomats considered that it was important for local authorities to see that EU was entrusting their member-states with playing such a central role: “in the case of the

Lithuanian Presidency, which is post-Lisbon already, as a neighbour, it should play a bigger role in Minsk so that in Brussels it can also promote what is happening in theatre” (interv. 34).

At the same time, the role of the Delegation in Minsk was of particular importance as most of the embassies (with exception of Polish and German ones) were rather small in terms of the number of diplomats present (as presented in Table 22). A national diplomat might have a high level of engagement on national priorities in their agenda such as trade, cultural or public diplomacy: “I engage in a great deal of public diplomacy (so far in 6 months I have met 2000 people, among my other activities) and less on the relations directly with the government. I get involved on the EU level there where I know that my country has most added value or comparative advantage; on all other matters I let colleagues in the Delegation maintain and consolidate the dialogue with the government” (interv 36). Therefore, the coordination that the EUD provided to the member-states was useful to provide structure and focus not only among EU actors but also in relation to the local government (interv. 33). As one national diplomat described it “the perception is that the Delegation is more involved, more visible in the dialogue with the authorities. If before the discussion was mainly technical and less known, now the relationship is much better, more constructive” (interv 37). For example, the visa-facilitation dialogue among MS had become more pragmatic since the EU delegation assumed the chairing role (ibidem).

This new role, also brought more pressure on the Delegation and, in Belarus, there were certain expectations from national diplomats vis-à-vis this role. Some argued that the Delegation needed to do more (interv. 34). The concern was that due to geopolitical circumstances in the Eastern neighbourhood less attention was given to Belarus in Brussels; and diplomats considered that Belarus should be brought back onto the agenda in Brussels (ibidem). Others considered that the role of the Delegation was to be neutral (interv. 35). This is to say that the Delegation’s role was to continuously follow the political discussions and to understand the current state of affairs in Belarus. In its role of information node, the Delegation was expected to maintain the information channels with all the members in the diplomatic community and to provide the European general view (ibidem). For the Delegation, it was challenging to be in the role of the chair all the time as this routine job implied that

“the Delegation needs to be engaged, to create synergies and to be in close cooperation with the member-states and look for ideas for potential initiatives or open for the ones coming from the member-states” (interv 33). This implied not only chairing but also maintaining a high degree of coordination capacity, working on consensus among member-states and maintaining good relations with the host government (ibidem).

One particular situation showed the importance of the role of the Delegation that member-states’ readily acknowledged, when, for example in 2012, Belarus (as a tit-for-tat response to an expansion of sanctions against it by Brussels) asked that certain ambassadors were recalled to their capitals (Poland’s ambassador and the Head of the EU delegation). This created a common front in the diplomatic community under the auspices of the Delegation, under which they defended their interests, and became a united and cohesive group, which resulted in enhanced synergy among MS (intev. 33). It also showed the role and importance of the Delegation as perceived by the local authorities (since they decided to recall the EU Head of Delegation). As a British diplomat argued, “in Minsk then I prefer to talk with the local authorities via the Delegation, as this raises our credibility, it is a good trend as it shows the common position agreed by the Member states” (interv 36). This made the role of the Delegation a central point of reference for all member-states (interv. 37) and was seen as useful in their relationship with Belarusian authorities and in building consensus among MS (interv. 36).

6.4. Relevance: ‘common approach’ in Minsk

The changes that the Lisbon Treaty entailed, referred also to the cooperation among the Delegation and member-state embassies in third countries (art. 32). In this section evidence in relation to relevance as a criterion of diplomatic performance is presented and the corporate diplomatic practices on formulation and implementation of a common approach, as operationalised in Chapter 3 are brought forward. For the Delegation, the common approach is two-fold: towards Belarus and towards the member-states. As an EU diplomat disclosed, “the policy itself is shaped in Brussels and member-states are shaping part of this policy and in this why we try to have a common approach. What is decided in Brussels is the Bible. Member-states then

have to implement or respect the 'modus vivendi', so it is about the ability to forge something in common" (interv. 33). As one diplomat explained: "EU values and policy lines are agreed upon in Brussels, the policy lines are shaped in Brussels, including shaping general understandings; then reports come straight to the third countries and not necessarily to capitals" (interv. 35).

For those member-states that had been engaged in the diplomatic activity in Belarus for a longer time, the common approach was sometimes about even more practical things such as assuring that everyone attended events: "in a small community if all attend or none attends this is not only visible but may send the wrong message to the third country" (interv. 36). Hence working together ensured the common approach for the diplomatic community; this took form of attending public events, organizing events together, working together within EU programmes, and therefore raised the diplomatic profile of individual member states as well as that of the EU in Belarus (*ibidem*).

For the Delegation, the common approach became about the member-states' ability to forge something in common which, as result, brought more engagement (interv. 33). Some national diplomats talked about the 'common approach' in a similar manner, that it was about a constant dialogue in Minsk and in Brussels to help identify the most important points of action: the "common approach is about a general understanding that all member-states stick to general political lines agreed in Brussels even though there are different opinions and we cannot find strong common issues but we have to have one voice" (interv. 35). The common approach, hence, was about relating to the general political lines set out in Brussels and if this was not possible to achieve on the ground, then diplomats sent requests to Brussels to react and look for common lines (*ibidem*). As one diplomat stated, "the common approach is (also) about sanctions, what we do with them. It is about common decisions here or in Brussels (...) Sometimes it is about not discussing and not changing it on paper but about a general approval, a silent agreement, providing a feeling of comfort that it is good to do one thing or another" (interv. 34).

Post-Lisbon, with the new role of the Delegation, the meetings within the working groups (see Table 26) became a useful instrument for the diplomatic community: "we are quite unified and then the focus of our meetings is narrow: on political situation in

the country, the situation of political prisoners, the issue of sanctions (200 people and institutions); therefore being unified is very important” (interv. 36). Sometimes there was pressure on the Latvian, Lithuanian or Polish counterparts in third countries, from the perspective of their bilateral relations, and in these cases especially the usefulness of being part of the working group and being able to negotiate and resist this pressure was tremendous. The information flow within these groups was high, open and in English: “the openness goes to the extent of sending a text-message and you get replies to your questions” (interv. 35). Generally, national diplomats argued that in their regular meeting the community was very coordinated, rather unified and usually unanimous in their decisions (interv. 34, 35, 36, 37). Some diplomats explained that the Belarus political reality was the one that made diplomatic coordination either easy when all were ‘on the same page’ or difficult – “as access is very limited, access to information, to institutions, to people and influencing anyone or any process in Belarus becomes very tricky” (interv 36). In the same way, the political landscape in Belarus dictated the realities of the Delegation as well: “when it was established, the relationship with Belarus was in a crisis and there was no strong relationship with other embassies” (interv. 33).

A prominent example of cooperation among the EU Delegation and the member-states resulted in the MOST project that provided professional exchange and mobility opportunities between Belarus and the EU. It was a joint collaboration between the Delegation and the German and British embassies (the Goethe Institute in Minsk and the British Council became the implementing agencies) that aimed at enhancing people-to-people-contacts between Belarus and the EU for promoting mutual understanding and exchange of best practice in core sectors such as culture, education and youth, science and technology (MOST, 2014). Another project that was the result of the cooperation between UK, Poland and Germany was the Culture and Creativity programme that aimed at supporting cultural and creative industries; increasing their contribution to sustainable humanitarian and socio-economic development in the Eastern partnership countries. This was a British-led initiative with the implementing agencies being the British Council in partnership with the National Centre for Culture Poland and the Goethe Institute (Culture Partnership, 2015).

Sanctions and how to proceed with sanctions was a big concern for member-states and was the main topic among the diplomatic actors in Belarus. For some, sanctions were not effective as they created artificial conflicts and problems (interv. 33). According to the Delegation, sanctions had both positive and negative connotations: sanctions did not achieve the effects the member-states were looking for such as the release of prisoners but created other effects such as exerting pressure on the local authorities related to economy and personal image (ibidem). Others were more neutral in this respect. They embraced the fact that cooperation took different angles while emphasizing that decision-making was very slow and that the EU needed to find common understanding and common lines because “it can be frustrating to sit in those meetings” (interv. 35). For others then, working closely with other actors such as international organisations or local civil society groups, especially on the matter of prisoners, facilitated putting things in perspective (interv. 36). An EU diplomat reiterated that in such cases, on the ground there was, among MS, a sort of ‘gentleman’s silent agreement’, meaning that what they agreed on were the minimum possible things and their role was then to convince their headquarters about them and find solutions (interv. 33).

The aim of sanctions such as visa-bans and targeted economic sanctions was to spur democratization processes in Belarus. However, evidence showed more divergence than convergence and MS continued to trade with Belarus and keep its economy afloat⁵⁵: “Belarus declared a €2.5 billion trade surplus in 2011 after trade between the two sides (i.e. EU MS) shot up by 76% in the first nine months alone” (Nielsen, 2012a). As the Commission’s trade report showed, in 2011, the EU 27 became the main trade partner of Belarus (DG Trade, 2012). Moreover, some MS (Slovenia) chose to veto the EU’s decision to include one Belarusian business or another on the so-called black-list based on important ongoing business/trade deals (interv BEL 1, 2) or strongly opposed economic sanctions (Lithuania). And as the mass-media reported, some European banks (the Royal Bank of Scotland, BNP Paribas and Deutsche Bank) continued to invest in the Lukashenko government to the sum total of more than \$800m (€551m) in Belarusian government bonds (The Independent, 2011).

⁵⁵ EU mainly imports non-agricultural products from Belarus such as fuels and mining products and exports machinery and transport equipment (DG Trade, 2012)

As Table 26 showed, in Minsk, there were also regional frameworks of cooperation such as Visegrad and the Nordic groups. The Slovak, Polish, Hungarian and Czech cooperated within Visegrad, through which the latter overcame their Soviet heritage and laid the foundations for cooperation and built themselves a Central European identity (interv. 34). Despite certain disagreement vis-à-vis Belarus, members of the Visegrad group sought coherence: “in certain issues there is divergence of positions: there have been small problems in the case of the Ukrainian crisis; there was skepticism about sanctions with the exception of Poland which was enthusiastic. So political differences are shown. In this situation we take it from regional cooperation to bilateral relations, we are trying not to politicize, some issues we decide on a bilateral level, such as the issue of minorities for example” (ibidem). The Visegrad group released several common statements. In 2013, the V4 members expressed the hope that the Belarusian authorities would respond positively to the invitation to negotiations on visa facilitation and readmission agreements. They stressed their conviction that mobility of people should not be held hostage to undemocratic conduct by the authorities. The Visegrad countries also reiterated their commitment to the policy of critical engagement towards Belarus, emphasising the need to further develop the European Dialogue on Modernisation (V4 statement, 2013). In 2015, the V4 stressed the importance of keeping the inclusive nature of the Eastern Partnership and strengthening ties with Belarus, and welcomed the actions taken since the Vilnius Summit in 2013 in developing individually tailored bilateral relations between the EU and Belarus (Visegrad, 2015).

What came across from the interviews is that the Visegrad group was informing the Delegation about its activities and was cooperating with the Nordic group. Historically Sweden, Finland and Denmark had a close Nordic cooperation which was still very important and exhibited in Minsk. For Nordic cooperation in Belarus, for example, represented by the Swedish and Finnish embassies, it was important to be very pragmatic and careful about their common lines (intev 35). Although Nordic cooperation was less and centralized it was maintained for the purpose of looking for common tendencies. In 2011, the Nordic group established an Open Europe Scholarship Scheme and European Scholarship Scheme for Young Belarusians that offered them an opportunity to acquire a high-quality university education in Europe, thus laying foundations for further democratic development of Belarus (Nordic

Council, 2011). In 2014, in Belarus, a revival of this cooperation took place through a series of initiatives such as the New Nordic Food event where a market place was organized in Minsk to promote Nordic food; this was a joint event of the embassies of Sweden, Finland and Denmark (the Ambassador of Denmark in the Russian Federation is also accredited as a non-resident Ambassador to Belarus). Another common event organized by the Swedish and Finnish embassies was election voting and the organization of Swedish and Finnish parliamentary voting in the same premises. This was possible due to co-location of the Finnish embassy within the Swedish embassy. This was seen as an advantageous solution to the sharing of diplomatic resources as well as a means of giving leverage to the Finnish diplomat to attend events irrespective of his diplomatic rank – hence he could establish networks in higher and lower ranked diplomatic circles (ibidem).

While these two groups were quite active and were gaining momentum, some diplomatic representations argued that there was no coalition of the member-states through which interests could be promoted and common points of agreement identified (interv. 37). Diplomats emphasized that in Belarus, the closer a MS was to this country geographically and historically, the greater was the understanding of the local political realities and hence, these countries had a more involved role in the common meetings as well (ibidem). Proximity to the region may also be detrimental. What came across from the interviews with national diplomats is that some meetings were spent on debating minor issues such as participating or not at the celebrations of the Independence Day of Belarus and unity could not be reached in the end: “this leads to unnecessary debates that lead to unsolved dilemmas and present schizophrenia among members. Everyone is trying to show a common face and not to be a trouble maker. As consequence, results are more conservative than creative and proactive” (interv. 34).

Although the common meetings organised by the Delegation only developed after 2010, diplomatic actors made use of those as a channel of communication among each other and shared information, hence creating a resource. This and other social and political capital present in Minsk is discussed in the following section.

6.5. Capabilities: diplomatic resources in Minsk

The framework for cooperation created by the Delegation in Minsk was fairly new: as was indicated earlier, findings showed that the oldest form of interaction that engaged all diplomatic actors was the Schengen meeting, established in 2010. While the most recent one, between 2010 and 2015, was the meeting of economic counsellors who had their first meeting in November 2014. Although interviewees did not disclose the frequency of these meetings, they stated that they participated in all of them from HoMs to sanctions, to human rights and the others presented in Table 26 (interv. 34, 35, 36, 37). Given the small size of most embassies in Minsk (see Table 22), the Delegation made sure to coordinate the time of the meetings in such a manner that everyone could be present; on the rare occasion that someone could not attend the meeting on the agreed date, they would be informed by one of the colleagues about it (interv. 33, 37).

Diplomats present in Minsk put a great value on the fact that these meetings had become a valuable network where participants were willing to participate, open to engage in discussions and reply to questions, even if these were exchanged via text-messages (interv. 35). They also emphasized that there was a positive practice of open information flow among all members of the diplomatic community, including the Delegation (*ibidem*). For smaller embassies, the sharing of information practices between colleagues was highly appreciated: due to their small number of diplomatic staff, they had to prioritize and choose which of the common meetings to attend. So, they relied a lot not only on the reports from the EUD but also on the information sharing between colleagues: “from sharing of opinions I sometimes learn a lot, but sometimes I close my ears. Overall this communication helps us to have contacts and pool information. At the end of the day I think the smaller the embassy the better as it is constrained to be proactive, busy and engaged” (interv. 36). In this sense, what interviewees highlighted was that the openness to share information was especially *vis-à-vis* smaller member-states, a practice embraced by the Delegation as well (interv. 35).

For the Delegation, as mentioned earlier, designing such a resource was also challenging because of the need to be the chair all the time, as this implied a higher degree of secretarial duties as well: coordinating of agendas, writing reports (interv.

33). EU diplomats mentioned that before-Lisbon in such a task one could rely on the commitment of the embassy holding the Presidency 'who were happy to do it', while post-Lisbon this was routine work for the Delegation "who needs to be engaged, to create synergies and to be in close cooperation with the member-states and look for ideas for potential initiatives or open for the ones coming from the member-states" (ibidem). For member-states, the coordination role of the EUD was seen as useful as it provided structure and focus to the group of diplomats (interv. 37); and participants were always asked to submit points for the agenda established by the EUD (interv. 35).

National diplomats further emphasized that in terms of content the meetings were narrow in focus, such as on political situation in the country, the situation of political prisoners or the issue of sanctions and diplomats were dealing with sensitive issues which meant that 'being unified' was of key importance: "there is animosity from the host government, so we are hanging together in adversity, relying on each other, and needing each other. When a colleague has a problem he gets the answer and support from the community" (interv. 36). Others further explained that to an external observer there might seem to be inertia in diplomacy since the decision-making process in Brussels was very slow and diplomats had to find the middle ground in Minsk. Yet, what is to be appreciated is that "in this way we are avoiding big mistakes from the beginning. We do not rush to make quick emotional decisions, which can happen on a bilateral level, but should be avoided on a multilateral one. And then, when a decision is taken in Brussels then it is not able to change it quickly. When it is about substance, it is not bad that it happens so slow" (interv. 34). Therefore, in Minsk, the aim in the common meetings was to work on consensus among MS and create relationships with the local authorities (interv. 36).

Given the mandate of the Delegation to maintain a dialogue with the government of Belarus and with local stakeholders (civil society organisations, universities, local media) on economic, social, governance, human rights and other policy issues, the HoMs meetings and the role played by the HoD in this sense was important (interv. 33, 34). As one diplomat noted, "there is also evaluation of what we are doing and in the real kitchen of diplomacy ambassadors should be cautious in their statements." (interv. 34). The HoD of the Commission representation in Kiev commented on the

opening of the representation in Minsk and stated that the “Head of Delegation needs to be able to communicate both with those to whom he is accredited and with those by whom he is sent. This is essential to creating a better understanding. From such understanding can come some progress” (Boag, 2007). In her public appearances, the HoD followed the policy and decisions taken already in Brussels, emphasizing, for example, that ‘the release and rehabilitation of all political prisoners in Belarus is a prerequisite to a dialogue between the EU and Minsk’ and that ‘no modernization is possible unless it is defined and undertaken by the Belarusian people themselves’ (Naviny, 2013). And while certain news anchors speculated that the HoD did not enjoy the confidence of many Belarusian politicians (Charter 97, 2015), President Lukashenko met with the HoD, emphasized that he did not meet with every ambassador whose mandate is expiring, and praised her work “to promote dialogue with the big Europe, help us understand each other better and improve our relations” (Lukashenko, 2015).

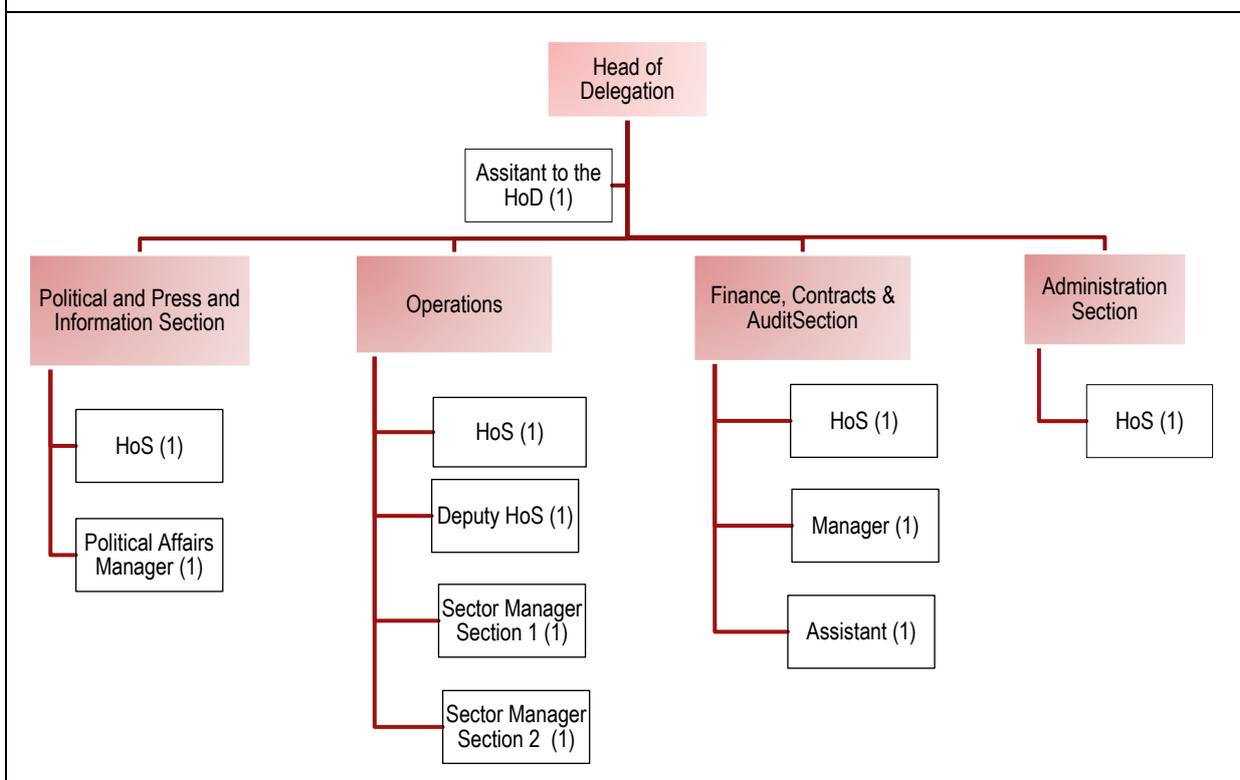
Table 27: Head of EU Delegation in Minsk: 2008 - 2015		
Nr.	Name	Period in office
1.	Jose Manuel Pinto-Teixeira*	2008 – 2011
2.	Maira Mora	2011 - 2015
3.	Andrea Wiktorin	2015 - present
<i>Note:</i> * Jose Manuel Pinto-Teixeira was Head of Delegation of the Commission Representation in Minsk, he was resident in Kiev, where he was HoD (see Table 21)		
<i>Source:</i> authors’ compilation based on fieldwork conducted in Belarus in 2014		

Mrs. Mora was the second Head of Delegation, as presented in Table 27 below, however she was the first HoD that was located in Minsk and represented the Union. Before her, the Commission was represented by a Chargé d’affaires in Minsk whereas the first Head of the Commission representation, Mr. Jose Manuel Pinto-Teixeira, was resident in Kiev (see Table 21) and remained accredited to Minsk as well (ODB, 2007). The latter became in 2008, the HoD of the Commission representation in Ukraine till 2012. Some argued that in Minsk, the fact that the Head of the EU Delegation was from Latvia was a good decision “as a neighbour she understands all aspects we are discussing within the group of 16 embassies present

in Minsk – very detailed and openly, in all aspects. Even big countries, Germany, the UK and Poland are listening” (interv. 34). Diplomats noted that the openness and willingness to cooperate as well as the transparency that the Delegation presents in its activity also depended on the HoD, Mrs. Maira Mora.

Evidence further showed that the link between all the meetings was provided by the Head of Political Section who was tasked to chair 3 (Sanctions, Political and Human Rights and Economic ones) out of 5 meetings and was present in the other two (see details in Table 26). In the case of the Delegation in Minsk, the Head of Political Section, who was the second person in the Delegation (see Figure 10 below), was the one to create some of the working meetings, such as: the Political and Human Rights and the Economic one. According to him, the chairing role, over time, as these meetings develop, would be a shared role with the MS through co-chairing certain meetings (for example, on human rights) or even taking over the chairing role (for example, on Schengen) (interv. 33).

Figure 10: Internal organisation of the EU Delegation in Minsk, 2014



Source: authors' compilation during the fieldwork conducted in Belarus in 2014 and based on the website of the EU Delegation in Minsk (currently archived)

Figure 10 above presents the post-Lisbon organigramme of the EU Delegation based on the field-work conducted in Belarus in 2014. Little information was disclosed on the internal organisation of the Commission representation. Based on the archived webpage of the latter, in 2010, the delegation was run by the HoD residing in Kiev; on the ground, there was the Chargé d'affaires a.i., a political officer and a project manager. The situation clearly changed with the appointment of Mrs. Mora as HoD to the Delegation to Belarus where she also resided, unlike the previous HoD. Whereas no data was available on the individual units in terms of size, what becomes apparent from the figure is that the Operations section was the largest one. This is in line with the data presented in Table 23 in the beginning of this chapter that showed that out of a total of 27, 17 were Commission personnel which came, as interviewees confirmed, from DG DevCo (interv. 33).

On the ground, one of the changes brought by the Lisbon Treaty implied that the Delegations were supposed to have one-third of their staff from EEAS and the member-states that would work together with the Commission staff (DG DevCo and DG Trade). Internally, the lines of command were blurred as seconded national diplomats stationed in Minsk were, de jure, EEAS staff, but in practice, "I am responsible in front of not just the EEAS but also in front of DG DevCo, but I am not double-hatted" (interv. 33). Furthermore, evidence showed that within the Delegation, there was no visa diplomacy, no cultural diplomacy, and no trade diplomacy, just technical and political cooperation as the main activity performed by the staff in the Operations (DG DevCo) dealing with the technicalities of the reports (ibidem). What becomes obvious from Figure 10 above is that the Delegation was lacking an Economic and Trade Section and, as discussed previously, the coordination of economic counsellor meetings fell under the Political, Press and Information Section. This meant that the Delegation reports were done together on issues where the dossiers of political officers overlapped and separately on specific, sectoral areas (usually done by the staff in the Operations section), with the approval from the Head of Delegation (interv. 33). What was seen as problematic for the political officers in the Delegation is that the Press and Information unit under the Political, Press and Information Section relied, in their daily activity, on the hired local staff and given the sensitive political issues discussed in the meetings, the diplomatic personnel also had to conduct strict oversight of the work of the local staff (ibidem).

In relation to human resources, a general observation was made in Minsk, common to both the national and Union diplomatic representations: that they were understaffed or lacking expertise. National diplomats observed that since most embassies were small, in some meetings there were only 2-3 diplomats sharing positions and opinions (interv. 36). This, in turn, created a vicious circle as the same diplomats participated in different working groups and reaching consensus was a challenge: “while divergence of opinion is good, as you can recognize the expertise of each country, and helps you put things in perspective, most of the time diplomats disagree not on goals but on means” (ibidem). Some added to this, that in these cases personal charm and personality mattered: “it is about the people, to be friendly and understanding; in other cases (working in Central Asia) you have to be more convincing and then the diplomatic activity is tense” (interv. 37). But, as one national diplomat explained, diplomats resorted to certain tricks when they could not reach agreement - they were less specific, used a vaguer language and took a position that was not clear and left room for interpretation (interv. 34). Besides diplomatic skillfulness, professional experience and know-how were of significant importance to the community. What was of central importance for the diplomatic community were the language skills (Russian specifically) and the experience accumulated of all participants (interv. 37). For example, the Head of Political Section also had to deal with trade issues on which he was lacking proper know-how, therefore he preferred to co-chair the meetings with a national diplomat. In certain meetings, his lack of expertise was a means for convergence among MS “it is not natural for me to chair the Schengen group, yet my background helped to be approved by colleagues and have confidence” (interv. 33).

On the ground, the conduct of diplomacy was also affected by the institutional tensions in Brussels that reflected in the Delegations. Diplomatic staff found it difficult to have two lines of reporting in Brussels – to the EEAS and to the Commission – and saw this as creating dividing lines and separation within the Delegation. What happened was that as the chairing role was performed by the EEAS or seconded diplomats in the Delegations they had to report to the respective DGs in Brussels, so “the main chain of command is not the EEAS but the DGs” (interv. 33). The respective DGs sent inquiries with precise and specific questions to the diplomats in the Delegation in Minsk which required a specific technical expertise that diplomats

did not necessarily have. Hence, providing an answer from an expert was a challenging task and created dividing walls between the Delegation and Brussels. As one EU diplomat explained, what worked to their advantage within the Delegation was that the close cooperation was created as the team was small and young, yet what was a disadvantage were the administrative barriers within the Delegation that reflected the Brussels 'turf wars' (ibidem).

6.6. Conclusion

In Belarus, as empirical evidence presented in this chapter discussed, the development of bilateral relations with the EU fluctuated between engagement and isolation, was conditioned by the progress in the areas of democracy, respect of human rights, and the rule of law in Belarus and was largely dominated by sanctions for the last two decades. The period of rapprochement started with Belarus taking part in the multilateral track of the Eastern Partnership and the opening of the EU Delegation in Minsk in 2008. Findings presented on the diplomatic performance of the European Union in Belarus were discussed according to the three established criteria in the analytical framework - effectiveness, relevance and capability – and assessed in the same structured manner.

In this thesis, effectiveness is generally operationalised as goal attainment and is evaluated on two dimensions. The first one explored the level of democratic governance in Belarus based on the level of adaptation to EU rules and norms under the framework of the EaP. Findings showed that Belarus had the poorest scores on all dimensions of cooperation with the EU due to its low level of alignment to EU rules and norms (see Table 25). In 2014, Belarus was included on the list of most repressive countries in the world and its human rights record qualified it as a 'black hole' on the European map. Some improvements in EU-Belarus relations took place after 2013: in June 2014, the EU and the Republic of Belarus started to negotiate visa facilitation and readmission agreements and launched negotiations on the Mobility Partnership in 2015. And, the release of 6 political prisoners by President Lukashenko in August 2015, was seen as important progress in the improvement of relations between Belarus and the EU.

Although Belarus was not one of the neighbouring countries included in the ENP, the EU offered financial assistance via TACIS to support Belarus' transition to a democratic market-oriented economy. The volume of technical assistance offered to Belarus (Table 24) represented more than 40% of all the technical assistance provided to the country, which made the EU become the single largest donor of assistance to this country in 2006. Although the activity of the diplomatic community in Belarus followed traditional diplomatic functions, MS embassies and the Delegation channelled their bilateral interaction with Belarus in a manner that supported Belarus' democratisation progress within the EaP framework. This could be seen in the range of their activities in Belarus: Latvia, for example, was active in cooperation among countries in economic, in particular transit, cross-border, cultural, educational and scientific, border control and management, environmental protection, cooperation between municipalities and people-to-people contacts fields. The visits of high-level Austrian officials to Belarus discussed issues of regional and international cooperation and the parties agreed on a series of steps to deepen cooperation between the two countries and to intensify the dialogue between Belarus and the European Union.

On a second dimension, findings showed that the Union Delegation was representing the Union and post-Lisbon, the first obvious change was the (absence of) rotating Presidency which brought more centralization and formalization of the cooperation in the hands of the Delegation. In order to do so, the EU Delegation created several working groups where diplomats regularly met, as presented in Table 26. The upgrade from Commission representation to Union delegation in third countries, also meant that the latter had to act in close cooperation with member-states. Therefore, to assess relevance, evidence collected discussed corporate diplomatic practices in Belarus in relation to formulation and implementation of the common approach. For the Delegation, the common approach became about the member-states' ability to forge something in common which, for national diplomats implied that the common approach was about a constant dialogue in Minsk and in Brussels to help identify the most important points of action. Empirical evidence showed several examples of joint EUD and MS collaborations such as the MOST project in 2014 or multilateral collaboration between member-states such as the Culture and Creativity programme (between UK, Poland and Germany). In Minsk,

there were also regional frameworks of cooperation such as Visegrad and the Nordic groups which released common statements (Visegrad) and shared diplomatic resources on the ground (for example, the Finnish diplomat co-located in the Swedish embassy).

An examination of the communication infrastructure, and of social and political capital conducted in the final section of this chapter presented findings on the last criterion, capabilities. Between 2010 and 2015, findings showed that the oldest form of interaction that engaged all diplomatic actors was the Schengen meeting, established in 2010 and the most recent one, was the one of the economic counsellors that had their first meeting in November 2014. National diplomats present in Minsk put great value on the fact that these meetings became a valuable networking and information-sharing opportunity. Given the mandate of the Delegation to maintain a dialogue with the government of Belarus and with local stakeholders on economic, social, governance, human rights and other policy issues), the HoMs meetings and the role played by the HoD in this sense were important. Diplomats noted that the openness and willingness to cooperate as well as the transparency that the Delegation presented in its activity also depended on the HoD, Mrs. Maira Mora. Evidence further showed that on the ground, the conduct of diplomacy was also affected by the institutional tensions in Brussels that were reflected in the Delegations as the diplomatic staff found it difficult to have two lines of reporting in Brussels – to the EEAS and to the Commission.

As could be seen in this chapter, there were both positive tendencies as well as challenges in the conduct of diplomacy in Belarus. The latter, in particular in terms of capabilities, were not particularly new but were echoing the Brussels ‘turf-wars’. In more general terms, however, the context of relations with Belarus and the development of relations from engagement to isolation and to rapprochement affected the conduct of diplomacy. These findings, together with the evidence presented on Moldova (chapter 4) and Ukraine (chapter 5), will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Chapter 7. Drivers and dividers of EU diplomatic performance in Eastern Europe

After having presented and generally discussed the empirical evidence on diplomatic performance in Moldova (Chapter 4), Ukraine (Chapter 5) and Belarus (Chapter 6), this chapter aims to bring the findings from the three countries together in order to compare and contrast them. As defined earlier in the analytical framework (Chapter 3), this will be done qualitatively by deriving empirical lessons vis-à-vis the three chosen criteria: effectiveness, relevance and capabilities. The exploratory case-studies conducted in this thesis allowed for the development, during the field-work, of an additional set of questions concerned with the understanding of diplomatic practices. In addressing them we could acquire information in areas where there was limited prior understanding about the conduct of EU diplomacy in Eastern Europe in general. This in turn, allowed us to uncover drivers and dividers of EU diplomatic performance in Eastern Europe. Given the exploratory nature of this thesis, as explained in the introduction (see section 1.3.), the investigation conducted for this research was guided by three assumptions (section 2.3.2.). Comparing and contrasting the findings from the three countries contributes also to probing the three working assumptions and linking the discussion in this chapter with the three dilemma presented in Chapter 2. Whereas in the previous three chapters empirical evidence was presented on a country by country basis, this chapter will provide a discussion of findings on all three countries, i.e. diplomatic performance in Eastern Europe.

A starting point for the discussion of diplomatic performance in Eastern Europe is the one of effectiveness. In the first section of this chapter, looking at performance implies examining and evaluating EU diplomatic practices against pre-set goals (identified in the ENP and the Lisbon Treaty) as well as understanding how the everyday practices between 2010 and 2015 informed the EU's actions. The second section will explore relevance or, as operationalized in Chapter 3, the relationship between national and EU level diplomats. Looking at performance from the position of relevance, allows us to uncover the corporate diplomatic practices that existed on the ground in Eastern Europe in 2010-2015, which implies their cooperation practices in formulating and implementing a common approach. The third section,

then, proceeds with a screening of diplomatic capabilities as operationalized in the analytical framework. Subsequently, findings on the three case-studies facilitate the discussion of the “drivers” and “dividers” in EU diplomatic performance in the fourth section. Finally, this chapter concludes with reflections regarding the three working assumptions for overcoming EU foreign policy dilemmas via the use of diplomacy.

7.1. Effectiveness: goal-attainment in Eastern Europe

Effectiveness has been defined in the analytical framework as the ability to fulfil goals by an actor. For a diplomatic actor, as operationalised in Chapter 3, the purpose is to secure foreign policy objectives. From this perspective, the notion of effectiveness encompasses the ability (or failure) to link means and ends by the EU in a specific environment, which in the case of this thesis is Eastern Europe. The empirical evidence collected on Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus had as reference point the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the Lisbon Treaty, from which we have derived benchmarks against which we can assess performance.

Based on the findings on Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus, we can conclude that there is a positive dynamic in relation to EU performance according to the effectiveness benchmarks set in this thesis. It is fair to say, that after the inauguration of the EEAS, on the ground, the *function of representation* happened naturally and the EU Delegation did not replace national embassies. Opened initially as Commission representations: in Kiev in 1993, in Chisinau in 2005 and in Minsk in 2008, post-Lisbon, the EU delegations acquired legal recognition that upgraded the former Commission representations to full-blown Union delegations. Findings showed that the task of representing the EU as a whole that has been given to the EU delegations was embraced in all three countries. For diplomats within the EU delegations, the practice of diplomacy is:

“[...] the duty to properly represent the interests of the EU citizens, businesses, society and the EU member-states vis-à-vis our [Ukrainian] counterparts. We have to be able to present them to the public in third countries; to present a proper and unbiased picture of the EU, to explain our [EU] position, to provide the background of what is going on in the EU, what is the position of the EU” (interv. 16).

Consequently, the conduct of diplomacy for national diplomats implied representing their own country and a constant exercise to “try to influence the situation in order to reach the foreign policy goals of my country” (interv. 27). The main division of tasks regarding representation is hence straightforward: the EU delegations represent the EU in areas of exclusive and shared competences, while every member state represents its own interests bilaterally with the host country.

The responsibility for representation and cooperation was taken over by most EU delegations from early 2010. It appeared that embracing this diplomatic function of representation provided continuity and built diplomatic capacity — issues that raised concerns pre-Lisbon and were associated with the rotating Presidency. Findings showed that in Moldova or Ukraine, having the role of the rotating Presidency occupied by a small member state could become a diplomatic disaster, especially if the member state had no previous experience of this role, was under-staffed and was mainly involved in bilateral diplomatic relations. The extreme negative consequence of this was that it showed the lack of knowledge of smaller member states of the EU context or even the agenda vis-à-vis third countries. From another perspective, in Belarus, the fact that EU member states, especially newcomers to the EU, will no longer have the opportunity to be in the role of a Presidency was seen as a downturn, in the sense that it was important for local authorities to see that the EU is entrusting a MS with playing such a central role.

Post-Lisbon, abolishing the chairmanship of the EU Presidency in host countries increased the EU’s visibility, as the EU delegation represented the EU in all policy areas where the EU has competence. Whereas it was initially expected that this would be a highly difficult logistical effort for the newly established EU delegations, in practice the level of engagement with the member states’ embassies on this matter was relatively high, also because of the Commission representations’ previous activity. Besides, the EU delegations were constantly growing their expertise in representing the EU. Member states’ embassies therefore entrusted the delegations with the (EU) representation role, while still preserving their watchdog role. This came with the EU delegation acquiring diplomats at the level of Head of Delegation and in the Political and Economic sections; as well as policy officers who had previous diplomatic experience. On the ground, there was a lot of synergy and

cohesion in relation to the traditional function of diplomacy among the EU delegations and national embassies, including those embassies that had been in host countries since the early 90s. There was a general openness towards the assumed leading role of the EU delegations, while national embassies were still trying to preserve their own visibility or their autonomous position.

Therefore, contrary to doubts generated by research regarding the new EU diplomatic machine (Balfour et al., 2012; Emerson et al., 2011; Lehne, 2011), it seems that the Lisbon Treaty changes made the EU's system of diplomacy more *robust*, as claimed by Smith (2014). This robustness was reflected through the EU's ability to significantly extend its presence in third countries and acquire more explicit institutional foundations (ibidem). This, in turn, comes with MS embracing '*symbolic representation*'. Scholars explained that the latter referred historically to the practice of diplomatic envoys representing rulers without necessarily coming from the same polity, which was not uncommon (Jönsson & Hall, 2005). Such a diplomatic practice departs from the traditional understanding of representation as '*acting for others*' (acting on explicit instructions and as mere agents) towards '*standing for others*' (diplomats can be perceived as symbols of other things than their own polity) (Jönsson, 2008). Hence, after the inauguration of the EEAS, we can account for a change in diplomatic practice in Eastern Europe through the deterritorialization of diplomatic representation. As Sending, Pouliot and Neumann (2011; 2015) argued, the latter is attributable to value-systems where constituents differ in that they are not territorially defined – as is the case of the EU and its member-states.

Furthermore, this openness of MS embassies towards the EUD embracing the function of representing the Union is related to the fact that the national objectives of the MS are also a product of the negotiations in Brussels and, as Spence (2008) emphasized, through EU coordination in Brussels, national diplomats come to share objectives among themselves, even when this is 'the expression of the lowest common denominator' (p. 65). Moreover, while some have pointed out the principal-agent relations between representatives and represented and that diplomats find themselves '*stranded between constituents*' (Hill, 1991, p. 97), others have highlighted that foreign ministries and embassies have become '*co-participants*' (Hocking, 2002, p. 285). Similarly, according to empirical evidence presented in this

thesis, *MS embassies and the EU delegations became co-participants* in representing the Union (according to the Lisbon Treaty) as well as in pursuing the ENP/EaP agenda on the ground. Or, as Bickerton (2011) argues, one of the main functions of the EU foreign policy is to actually be a route of pursuit of national strategies (p. 6).

The activity of both the EU delegations and the MS embassies, in Eastern Europe, showed their increasing role in facilitating the achievement of ENP and EaP goals. The activity of the diplomatic community in Ukraine during 2010-2015 revolved around Ukraine's agenda for integration to the EU. Diplomats' major tasks were related to political developments in relation to the progress and the reform agenda of Ukraine and they developed instruments to support democratization, good governance and the rule of law, and the human rights reforms (interv. 18). The Delegations also played a great role in reporting on the progress achieved by these countries within the ENP and EaP in relation to carrying out of specific reforms which can be seen within the ENP Progress Reports for individual countries. Member-state embassies focused their activities on specific goals such as "to have stable neighbours, less migration pressure, less human trafficking, stable political environment, stronger institutions and a better security environment (interv. 39); all of which are objectives within the ENP and EaP.

Based on the background of EU's relations with the three countries and the commitment of Moldova and Ukraine specifically to engage in EU-driven reforms according to the AA/DCFTA agenda, findings pointed to the fact that the practice of EU diplomacy has to do with shaping or influencing these countries internal dynamics. Through their diplomatic activity, both member-state embassies and the EU delegations engaged in what Keukeleire et al. (2009) identify as '*structural diplomacy*'. The latter is defined by the intensity of the diplomatic activity, a long-term approach and embeddedness within a broader range of foreign policy activities. The active approach of the diplomatic community in all three countries showed high intensity: besides statements, their activity was supported by actions in the form of joint monitoring missions (e.g.: the Cox-Kwasniewski mission in Ukraine), joint collaborations on education (e.g.: MOST project in Belarus) or joint programming (e.g.: water-management projects in Moldova). The long-term approach of the MS embassies and the EU Delegation was seen through their engagement from the

onset of the ENP and EaP policies and their statements on committing to continue providing assistance on European integration reforms beyond 2015. As the policies for Eastern Europe (ENP and EaP) developed and considered civil society a stakeholder for these countries to implement reforms, the diplomatic interaction in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus also became highly diverse (and by extension, embedded in further activities). Besides their traditional diplomatic role, even in Belarus, where the diplomatic relationship started to develop from 2008 onwards, national embassies and the EU delegations became very active in their roles as donors and developed a strong relationship with civil society organisations, not just the governments. Through their activity as donors, diplomatic actors invested in strengthening reforms and fostering democratic developments in these countries. But this is only one part of the story in the direction towards EU diplomatic performance. Surprisingly, effectiveness does not only reflect on achieving EU foreign policy objectives as a set of external goals, but also as internal ones and links to the research conducted by Bickerton (2011). In this case, it is less building the EU's own sense of identity than keeping the EaP countries in play as possible future EU members with their own European identities without the promise of membership given the enlargement fatigue. This is to say that it is the EU foreign policy that is the vehicle for goals, "which is made up of conflictual political relations between unstable and functionally disparate institutions" (p. 3). Taking into consideration the way in which MS embassies and the EUD act together on the ground, as discussed in the next section, certain challenges related to EU corporate diplomatic practices are brought forward. Variations in the degree of EUD-MS embassies engagement came with the political culture of the EU member states themselves: countries such as Germany, Sweden or the Netherlands were very outgoing, flexible, straightforward and transparent, which facilitated better cooperation with the EU delegation. Others, such as Poland, Romania, Hungary or Slovakia, were more traditional, engaging in bilateral diplomacy.

7.2. Relevance: corporate diplomatic practices in Eastern Europe

Representing the Union as a political entity through the EU delegations is an important step forward vis-à-vis EU performance. On the ground, however, the challenge for common diplomatic practices revolved around the new amendments of

the Lisbon Treaty regarding formulating and implementing a common approach (art. 32). Assessing diplomatic performance in relation to ongoing relevance, implies, as defined in the analytical framework (Chapter 3), an examination of the extent to which all parties (MS embassies and EUDs) engaged in acting collectively on the ground. In practice, this implies engaging in forms of multilateral diplomacy, where cooperation is key. Findings in relation to relevance have uncovered patterns of *corporate diplomatic practices*, meaning ‘those practices that are performed by collectives in unison’ (Adler & Pouliot, 2011, p. 8). This allowed us to address the juxtaposition between the European and the national level that has been challenged by European integration theory.

Findings showed that in Eastern Europe, corporate diplomatic practices have transitioned from a hierarchical to a *networking form of diplomacy*. The varied forms of meetings and interactions on the ground (presented in Tables 12, 20 and 26) anchored the EU diplomatic actors in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus in networks. And whereas the typology of meetings coordinated by the EUDs brought formalisation, centralisation and institutionalisation of diplomatic practices on the one hand; on the other hand, evidence showed that their development as a need to engage with an increasingly diverse range of actors is a manifestation of networking as a phenomenon. Between 2010 and 2015, what played a major role in reaching a common approach was the fact that that the frequency of meetings could be adjusted on the go and was not bound by rigid hierarchical structures. Furthermore, it became obvious that diplomatic practices on the ground anchored MS in a European setting of networking. Swidler (2001) explained that ‘*anchoring practices*’ work to the extent to which a group identifies with a set of practices “in which asserting one’s membership in the community means creating or joining a group which then claims [their] spot” (p. 92). Others further showed that some practices work as ‘anchoring practices’ when they provide ‘tools’ and ‘resources’ that actors need in order to engage with others (Sending & Neumann, 2011). This was possible on the ground through designing a network of meetings at different levels (from Heads of delegations and missions and deputy Heads to the level of counsellors) with different topics (thematic meetings on human rights, development cooperation, energy and transport, economic and commercial and press and information) and different degrees of ceremonialism (formal and informal). The fact that post-Lisbon

there was a higher level of involvement of the EU Delegation (as highlighted in Chapters 4, 5 and 6), and in general all members of the EU diplomatic community present in these countries, played its part in reaching the common approach.

It can also be argued that the high degree of cooperation put emphasis on the emergence of what Hocking and Smith (2016) identify as '*multistakeholder*' diplomatic processes. These processes, as the authors argued, are based on inclusiveness and partnership and aim at bringing together all major stakeholders in a new form of 'common decision finding' (ibidem). For example, for the EU Delegation in Kiev, the common approach implied a high degree of cooperation established through constant meetings with the EU member states' embassies, at different levels. This new function resembled the Council working procedures in Brussels, with the major difference being that, on the ground, there was little room to take immediate actions as such directives come from Brussels. Therefore, instead of decision-making, on the ground, corporate diplomatic practices were rather a form of common decision-finding as the cooperation with MS function quite often became the task of acting as the broker of common approaches or common statements. Once a common agreement had been reached on the ground, it was easier to act as one consolidated team vis-à-vis the host country.

Evidence further showed that '*multistakeholder diplomacy*' came with *burden-sharing* as a form of anchoring practices. Mérand and Rayroux (2016) discussed in their research burden-sharing of European security practitioners as an example of anchoring practices that "define the constitutive rules of interactive patterns in social groups. Even if some members of the social group disagree with the dominant rule, by criticising it, they actually reinforce the latter's centrality, as a common point of reference for the group" (p. 444). In Moldova and Ukraine, national embassies regarded the cooperation performed by the EU delegations positively. On the one hand, they were free of the logistical burden that came with the rotating Presidency role; on the other hand, they had, in addition to the instrument of bilateral diplomacy, the European apparatus (to use in achieving their foreign policy goals). In Belarus, for example, there are certain expectations from national diplomats regarding this function. Some argued that the EU Delegation in Minsk needed to do more, while others considered the EU Delegation's role to be neutral. For the EU delegations in

Eastern Europe, the Lisbon Treaty changes meant more work. This new function of cooperation brought more pressure. In Belarus, for example, for the EU delegations, this function implied that they needed to follow the political discussions all the time and to understand the current state of affairs in the host country. In Kiev and Chisinau, this function implied for the Delegations an extensive secretarial task of organizing, composing agendas, note-taking, information-gathering and sharing.

Creating synergies in cooperation for achieving the common approach was a challenging task for the EU delegation. EU member states benefited differently from common meetings, yet they were not always open about it; which made it difficult for the EU delegation to synthesize the results. As Mérand and Rayroux (2016) conclude, “practices are not as clear-cut as motives and norms because they are enacted by real social actors who play different games at the same time” (p. 457). Moreover, the authors also explained that burden-sharing as an anchoring practice does not suggest that national interest or strategic considerations or even prestige do not matter; all of these are taken into consideration by actors when deciding to engage in collective action. In Moldova and Ukraine, for example, some member states were not cooperative at all and did not come to meetings. This was for different reasons: from more objective reasons, such as lack of personnel, low or no knowledge of English (the working language of the meetings), to less objective reasons such as not being interested in the issue. Thus, acting as a broker for the common approach was not an easy task for the EUDs. It was often rather complicated, especially in those sensitive areas where EU member states had certain interests, whether migration, education, visas, energy or trade. Some (Poland, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia) lobbied the EU Delegation strongly; being very active in pushing for their own interests, and as neighbours of the host countries, they felt more confident in their national diplomatic line than in the EU approach.

Corporate diplomatic practices, as Adler and Pouliot (2011) defined, refer to the actions of a community of representatives whose members enter into regular relations within an organised social context. In Eastern Europe, what came across the interviews was that corporate diplomatic practices were bound by context or, as Adler-Niessen (2008) defined – the *diplomatic field*. In this sense, the stratification of

the diplomatic field in Eastern Europe, understood as a social system consisting of a patterned set of practices, was defined by the political development of relations between the three countries and the EU. For the EU Delegation in Minsk, the common approach was very much about the EU member states that had to implement or respect the *modus vivendi* designed in Brussels, where policy towards Belarus had been shaped: ‘what is decided in Brussels is the Bible’ (interv. 33). This was due to the recent rapprochement in relations with Belarus that had been largely dominated by sanctions for the last two decades. The common approach was thus about relating to the general political lines established in Brussels and, if this did not happen on the ground, diplomats then reverted to Brussels to react and look for common lines. Moreover, in Belarus, side-stepping could actually imply a political and diplomatic deadlock, which EU member states thus tended to avoid. For those EU member states that had been engaged in diplomatic endeavours for a longer amount of time, the common approach was sometimes about even more practical things, such as ensuring that everyone attended common meetings and public events: “in a small community, if all or none attend, it is not only visible but may send the wrong message to the host country” (interv. 36).

In a different context, in Chisinau and Kiev, some national diplomats find that what was lacking was cooperation on policy matters. The weakness of Moldova–EU diplomatic relations, for example, was the exercise of lobbying the Moldovan authorities as a common front. For the EU Delegation in Moldova, the common approach was, in the context of different EU member states’ interests, the result of the compromise between a more technical and a more political approach towards the host country. Even if technical aid took most space in the diplomatic cooperation between member-states and the Delegation, diplomats noticed over time that the Delegation itself was reluctant to upgrade the cooperation to joint programming and the conduct of diplomacy was aid-driven. Although some national diplomats considered that ‘this is not how diplomacy really functions’ (interv. 40), they continued to engage in the practice of aid-driven diplomacy. The high involvement of both MS embassies and the EUDs in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus in implementing and overseeing financial assistance offered to these countries bilaterally or via EU channels, meant that the EU diplomatic actors on the ground belonged to a *community of practice*. As Bicchi (2016) explained, the latter is a community based

on practice that develops, through its activities specific identity and a set of resources specific to the group. In this context, it can be argued that EU diplomatic actors acting as donors and engaging in a wide variety of technical-aid cooperation meetings and reporting, become an example of community of practice.

The discussion in this section is also conscious of the fact that emerging practices on the ground often stem from already existing practices; as Pouliot and Cornut (2015) showed in their research “when change occurs, new and innovative practices need to be synchronous with the past in order to resonate in the present” (pp. 306-307). The findings that discuss capabilities, the third criterion, bring forward how EU and MS diplomats in Eastern Europe routinely shared a practice of information-sharing and technical-aid cooperation, and that this was a path-dependent practice as much as a practice that was intertwined with the ENP and EaP goals. Hence, in the following section, a detailed screening of EU diplomatic resources on the ground is conducted.

7.3. Capabilities: a screening of resources in Eastern Europe

EU capabilities, as discussed in the analytical framework, go beyond establishing diplomatic offices overseas; as operationalised in Chapter 3, they refer to the EU’s ability to maintain these offices, to mobilise and use resources and to use them in a manner that adds value to its diplomatic actions on the ground. An examination of resources in chapters 4-6 evaluated information and communication as a diplomatic asset, including observations of practices of information-gathering and especially information-sharing among diplomatic actors as well as their competencies and knowledge.

An initial screening of resources further shows that the EU diplomatic actors in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus between 2010-2015 were anchored in a ‘*community of practice*’. There are three identifying elements of a community of practice: an *ongoing mutual engagement*, a *sense of joint enterprise* and a *shared repertoire* (Bicchi, 2016); all of which could be observed on the ground. Findings showed a wide and varied typology of the diplomats’ communication infrastructure in Moldova and Ukraine (presented in Tables 12 and 20) and a developing one in Belarus (Table 26). These meetings constituted mechanisms of cooperation, provided a common

communication infrastructure and accounted for regular institutionalized practices of diplomatic interaction. Empirical evidence further emphasized that EU diplomatic actors engaged on a regular basis (depending on the format, meetings vary in frequency: weekly, monthly, quarterly) in a high degree of information-sharing via written and oral reports, formal and informal data, as well as exchange of personal contacts. These meetings and the engagement of the diplomatic community during these meetings represent elements of a community of practice: ongoing mutual engagement (the practice of doing something regularly) and a shared repertoire (creating a specific set of tools and resources). Finally, the sense of joint enterprise is defined by members' shared sense of a common identity; the latter refers to "a routine of socially meaningful doing [...] that bring the group] the sense of joint enterprise involved in accomplishing a task" (Bicchi, 2016, p. 464). This could be seen, in the fact that the activities of national diplomats in bilateral diplomacy were happening within the broader EU context of relations with Moldova, Ukraine or Belarus. Therefore, their national agendas were related to political developments in relation to the progress of the EU-driven reform agenda of these countries and subsequently they developed instruments to support democratization, good governance and the rule of law or the human rights reforms. It is important to note that the sense of joint enterprise does not imply that everyone has to be in agreement, "but there must be a local, contextualised, indigenous response to external challenges [to the community of practice]" (ibidem). As an EU diplomat stated, in such cases, on the ground there was, among MS, a sort of 'gentleman's silent agreement', meaning that what they agreed on were the minimum possible things and their role was then to convince their headquarters about them and find solutions (interv. 33).

Research has pointed out the quintessential role of *communication* for diplomacy, and that a key diplomatic task that transforms into coordination is the clear communication of intent (Jönsson and Hall, 2005; Neumann, 2008); hence in achieving coordination, the crucial skill is communication, which allows one to 'get the right signal across' (Adler & Pouilot, 2011, p. 9). Based on the evidence presented in the empirical part of this thesis (chapters 4, 5 and 6), it is obvious that communication was at the core of the diplomatic interaction on the ground and that the EU delegations started to play a more central role in becoming an informational

network hub. The positive development post-Lisbon in this sense was the extensive communication infrastructure discussed above, coordinated by the EU delegations and open to all EU member states. Analysts note that sharing of information within these meetings is considered a crucial resource for diplomacy (Berridge, 2015). As evidence showed, the reports from the ground in Eastern Europe were shared through the common system – AGORA and COREU network - which carries communications related to CFSP, and involved exchanges of reports within the diplomatic network; most were political reports coming from the HoD. COREU allowed for a flow of information between the EUDs and MS as well as between EUDs and EEAS.

But this was not necessarily an emerging practice on the ground; rather, it was one that already existed on the ground and was highly visible in Kiev and Chisinau. The legacy of Commission representations and a certain *path-dependency* was noticeable in all three countries. On the one hand, the Commission offices were established as information offices and the EU delegations embraced fully the traditional communication function. On the other, the EU delegations embraced more technical tasks, such as project management, as the Commission offices were established as operational offices. A delegation's activities were therefore divided among operational, administrative, and political and diplomatic issues. As Figures 4 and 9⁵⁶ showed, in Moldova and Ukraine, only approximately 10 and respectively 15 per cent of the work related to the main functions of traditional diplomacy such as gathering, synthesizing and producing information, intelligence and counter-intelligence, producing reports and policy advice for headquarters, representing EU interests through engaging in public diplomacy, or developing economic and commercial cooperation through engaging in trade diplomacy. In contrast, approximately 50 per cent of the activity (the Commission legacy) was related to operational activities or what we earlier discussed as *aid-driven diplomacy* with tasks such as project management in the areas of good governance and democratization, economic cooperation and social and regional development, and infrastructure and environment-related developments. Diplomatic practice in Eastern Europe, hence, diversified and expanded to the extent of embracing new functions, such as acting

⁵⁶ No data has been disclosed about the structure of work of the EU Delegation in Minsk given that the circumstances for conducting interviews in Belarus were more difficult, as explained in Chapter 1 (see 1.3.)

as a donor. This, relatively new practice of diplomacy, the aid-driven one, was reflected in Eastern Europe in the internal structures of the Delegations, both pre and post-Lisbon (see Figures 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10). In all three countries, the operational sections in the EU delegations were bigger than the political ones.

A further evaluation of resources reflected on human resources issues, establishing a European esprit de corps and institutional turf wars as dimensions of capabilities on the ground. As a general observation, *human resource* issues were recurrent for both the national and Union diplomatic representations: for example, being understaffed; not sufficiently trained in EU policy-making; understanding, or the language of the host country. For national embassies, the issue of esprit de corps was mainly linked to most embassies being understaffed. Most embassies were small, with only two or three diplomats present. Another factor identifying human resources was the age range, experience accumulated of all participants and their language skills: being a skilful diplomat and knowing at least Russian was extremely important in all three countries. For the EUDs in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus, having one-third of their personnel from the EEAS brought the 'diplomatic' into their activity. Yet these were national diplomats, who were former employees of their ministry of foreign affairs (MFA) and who, after spending four years in the host country, would return not to the EEAS in Brussels but to their national MFA. Furthermore, given the number of EEAS staff and Commission staff in the Delegations (see Table 6), the latter represented a much larger proportion.

Another specific diplomatic practice in relation to human resources was also bound by the local context. This meant that EU Delegations were hiring local staff who, unlike their supervisors, spoke the local language. Usually Commission personnel (Operations sections) did not have a requirement to speak the local language. Yet, since reports from the Operations section bypassed the EEAS staff, with the exception of the HoD, these reports might carry an indirect political message vis-à-vis the host country. For example, EEAS staff in the EU delegations were surprised to read about positive developments regarding reforms carried out by certain ministries in the host countries. Such technical reports may therefore tailor a political message of approval to those ministries, which, according to political officers in the EU delegations, could be seen as an indirect message of political support; and this was not necessarily aligned with the EU's political position in Brussels vis-à-vis the

country. EEAS staff in the EU delegations had the possibility of seeing the relevant reports a couple of days before they were published, but since the latter had already been approved in Brussels, this was merely done for informational purposes.

Research on EU diplomatic practice has discussed the symbolic power of national diplomats, achieved due to their states' symbolic position versus the potential of the symbolic power of the EEAS (Adler-Niessen, 2014). But research also shows that the struggle between national diplomacy and the EU's new diplomatic service concerning its symbolic power is unsubstantiated (ibidem). Observations from the fieldwork conducted in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus pointed to the fact that the *struggle over symbolic power* is not so much located in the intersection of the national and EU levels but rather in the inter-institutional dimension. This links back to research conducted by Koenig (2011) that put emphasis on issues related to institutional coherence especially when different institutional actors share responsibility for the EU's efforts abroad but act divergently and, therefore, affecting EU's credibility on the international arena. In all three countries, the inter-institutional 'turf wars' echoed Brussels' inter-institutional dynamics: internally, the EU delegations reflected three specific institutional tensions⁵⁷. One tension was an echo of the intra-EEAS tensions – between people inside the EEAS and people from the national diplomatic service. The latter spent, on average, 4 years in the Delegation, were employees of their respective MFAs and would return back to their home capitals, bypassing Brussels. In Kiev, for example, this created a degree of mistrust between the staff coming from Brussels and the staff coming from the national capitals to the Political section. A second tension was related to the relationship between the EEAS and the Delegation. Although political officers believed that information should be exchanged equally and frequently between them and the EEAS, in practice, information flows were more frequently directed to Brussels than to Delegations. And a third power struggle, echoed the inter-institutional dynamic between EEAS and certain DGs in the Commission. Structurally, there are two parts within an EU delegation: the Commission part, represented by DG DevCo and the DG Trade personnel; and the EEAS part, represented by national diplomats or EEAS personnel. The European Commission's staff work on sensitive issues in the area of good governance, rule of law, education, corruption and energy, etc., which are all

⁵⁷ No tensions between officials in the Delegation and DG Near was recorded.

very political in nature. The EEAS personnel are in charge of the political agenda, yet in the period studied they were most often not consulted on the reports on sectoral issues that went directly to Brussels, bypassing the political officers. This, in turn, created dividing lines within the EUDs and, as some scholars have already emphasized, such institutional conflicts also have a powerful effect on policy outputs (Bickerton, 2011).

7.4. Drivers and dividers of EU diplomatic performance

The exploratory nature embraced by this thesis allowed for the development, during the field-work conducted in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus, of an additional set of questions concerned with the understanding of diplomatic practices. In addressing them we could acquire information in areas where there was limited prior understanding about the conduct of EU diplomacy in Eastern Europe in general. Against the background of the high degree of networking and engagement in meetings, the follow-up discussions with diplomats on the ground addressed the following questions: What forces drive EU diplomatic actors to engage in joint activities and fulfilment of common goals? And which factors hamper this? In this section, we analyse the degree of coordination of joint activities among EU diplomatic actors and explore the “drivers” and “dividers” in this process. A summary of the drivers and dividers of EU diplomatic performance in Eastern Europe is presented in Table 28 below, followed by a discussion of each one of them.

Table 28: Drivers and dividers of EU diplomatic performance	
<i>Drivers</i>	<i>Dividers</i>
Bloc diplomacy	
Multistakeholder diplomacy	Unilateral diplomatic actions
Burden-sharing	Interest-driven diplomacy

Bloc diplomacy

There are different modes of diplomacy; in large settings, as scholars explain, participants form coalitions or blocs, based on regional affinity, shared interests or common ideology (Leguey-Feilleux, 2009; Berridge, 1995; Walker, 2004; Barston 2013). Even though “pooling resources with others is often an effective way of achieving your own objectives” (Walker 2004, p. 17), in Moldova and Ukraine, most instances of pooling resources were among certain MS, while in Belarus, such examples were scarce. The interactions of MS, when it came to formulating and implementing a common approach, took place in the different groups which had a regional focus. It was the meetings within regional frameworks of cooperation that offered the platform for doing so. Three groups in particular have been identified (Table 12, 20 and 26):

- 1) The *Visegrad Group* (Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia), commonly known as the V4, collaborates in several areas of common interest in relation to European integration and aims at developing a broader regional cooperation with these countries through implementing projects there. Findings showed that this group was present in all three countries and formally engaged in joint actions.
- 2) The *Nordic (Plus) Group*, represents a group of ‘like-minded donors’ (Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark the UK, Ireland and the Netherlands) that are committed to enhancing aid effectiveness, on the basis of which has been conceived the principle of “good donorship’, which implies a joint action plan on harmonization and alignment of donor activities. This group was also present in all three countries and engaged in joint collaborations. In Belarus, although Nordic cooperation was less centralized it was maintained for the purpose of identifying common tendencies in their activities.
- 3) The *Baltic Group* refers to the three Baltic MS: Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, which do not officially have an institutionalised form of cooperation. Their cooperation practices were most felt in Ukraine, where they played an important role in exchanging with the Ukrainian counterparts their examples on reforms and offered national advisors to work with Ukrainian institutions. In Moldova, for the Baltics, the most natural form of cooperation was with the Baltic colleagues based on their shared interest in Moldova and the high flow

of information between them. However, there was no evidence regarding formalised cooperation of the Baltics in Moldova or Belarus. On the other hand, evidence showed that there was also strong cooperation between the Nordic and Baltic groups.

The diplomatic engagement and cooperation within these groups can be interpreted as both drivers and dividers in terms of diplomatic performance. *Drivers*, because bloc diplomacy involved a high degree of communication and negotiation among the embassies and the capitals of these countries to foster bloc cohesion. This meant that on the ground, both groups had a high degree of interactions that generated solutions to common problems, generated bloc support and provided them with an advanced expertise on bloc coordination. Empirical data showed that within these two groups, MS reached a level of agreement on common procedures (such as joint programming) and were able to link efforts on offering funds to civil society. *Dividers*, because the choice of bloc diplomacy came with the incentive for smaller powers to unite in order to take a stand against those who were tempted to run the show. In other words, some countries might be uncomfortable with the EU's central role. These groups did not include the EU delegations, which were not invited even as observers. During the common meetings under the auspices of the EU delegations, these groups do not report on their collective activities, strategies or plans.

Unilateral diplomatic actions

Engaging in multilateralism is a strong driver for inter-level cooperation in achieving common goals (as discussed below on multistakeholder diplomacy). Multilateral diplomacy serves several purposes such as coordination, building consensus, providing mutual assistance, finding solutions to common problems, managing fluidity and unpredictability of diplomatic situations and achieving common goals (Barston, 2013; Berridge, 1995; Leguey-Feilleux, 2009). Contrary to these expectations of multilateral diplomacy, EU diplomatic actors clearly do not always chose to cooperate, share resources or act together to project their interests in third countries. Scholars further emphasized that the key principle of multilateral cooperation is mutuality, implying participation in joint decision-making to foster legitimacy and capacity of the other (Van Langenhove, 2010).

As the evidence in chapters 4-6 showed, EU member states were often subtle in side-stepping from agreed positions, covering this under 'miscommunication'. For instance, in the case of former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, the common EU position on the ground was that the Council conclusions were the lowest common denominator. However, some EU member states chose to go public with statements encouraging the opposite, such as signing the Association Agreement with Ukraine regardless of the Council conclusions; this was a diplomatic statement approved and instructed by their national capitals and in spite of the common agreement established. In Moldova, diplomatic missions such as Germany for instance, did not like multilateral cooperation and preferred a bilateral approach. The same held true for Poland (in Moldova and Ukraine) with their "go-it-alone" tactics who preferred to pursue a parallel national agenda (Baltag & Smith, 2015).

The unilateral diplomatic actions are considered *dividers* in EU diplomatic performance. Being so focused on the primacy of their national diplomatic expertise often hampered achieving a common approach and made these member states act short-sightedly. This, in turn, left room for mistakes, such as confusing instances of bilateral track diplomacy with the (EU) multilateral approach. The fact that Romania is Moldova's advocate in the EU was well-known, yet its actions on the ground could be seen as provocative by other members of the diplomatic community: "in Moldova, Romania advises the Moldovan authorities, so information from the general meetings leaks to the Moldovan government and this leads to reluctance to cooperate; and become less transparent" (interv. 40). They become dividers especially when in certain cases, EU diplomatic actors are not led by the solidarity imperative, but rather by national interests, personal agendas or strong personalities (who are more competitive and ambitious to raise the profile of their national embassies). Findings showed cases when MS were guided in their actions by political will - or more precisely, the lack thereof. To cite one interviewee, "donor meetings became an arena for promotion and marketing of each other's activities and on top of that there is lack of political will to strategically coordinate" (interv. 9).

Multistakeholder diplomacy

Engaging in multistakeholder diplomacy is considered a driver for EU diplomatic practice due to its characteristics of inclusiveness and decision-finding and added value of unique expertise of stakeholders (Hocking & Smith, 2016). Empirical evidence showed how the openness to cooperate of EU diplomats led to avoiding overlap and reaching complementarity. In Moldova, the fact that there was a like-minded diplomatic community in relation to the position towards the Moldovan government created opportunities for establishing a common approach, for example. In Ukraine, multistakeholder diplomacy was beneficial when diplomats attended and engaged in the common meetings where discussions between diplomats took place, such as during the meetings coordinated by the EUD. In these meetings, individual member-states presented their positions and after discussion could present the EU position to the host country in a united way. Some put the emphasis on the fact that on the ground it was easier to join a common opinion, as a result of participation in the meetings, even if some member-states were not completely aware of the details of the developments in Ukraine. The sole purpose of the meetings was to share information so that all members of the diplomatic community were on board with the current developments. In Belarus, one interviewee emphasized the relevance of multilateralism as it gave the opportunity for all diplomatic actors to reach a 'silent agreement' in relation to the local government (interv. 34). Evidence further spoke in favour of competition among MS as a way of acquiring more knowledge and achieving results. The network form of diplomacy embraced by the common meetings revealed a nuanced pattern of relationships within multistakeholder diplomacy in Eastern Europe, which might be described as 'co-opetition'. As Etsy and Geradin (2000) defined, this is a practice when a mix between cooperation and competition is taking place among actors. One example was the Stronger Together campaign in Ukraine or agreeing on the Council decision on sanctions as the lowest common denominator in Belarus.

Interest-driven diplomacy

In the EU-member state tandem, national interests remain a crucial element when it comes to taking actions at European level (Petrov et al., 2012; Rijks & Whitman,

2007; Smith, 2003; Whitman & Manners, 2000); and can serve both as a driver or a divider. It may not be realistic to expect the ideal situation of an EU-27 speaking with one voice through its actions and it may seem more efficient for MS to unite in smaller groups or pursue individual actions. However, in practice, the result of this is counterproductive, and pursuing interest-driven diplomacy has proven to be a divider. Evidence showed earlier that there was little information sharing among the three groups present in the three countries or between them and the delegations; the meetings were not interconnected, so there was little room for sharing common practices across the general EU meetings. Having linkages with one region or another, or historical ties, may have had negative repercussions on the conduct of diplomacy of certain EU member states and heads of EU delegations in Ukraine, Belarus or Moldova, as they became hostages to their own past and did not account for the broader European perspective. The use of European diplomacy in the benefit of the national diplomatic interest (such as having a Polish ambassador in Ukraine, or a Latvian ambassador in Belarus) exhibited, at times, the pursuit of national interests and overshadowed the European interests. In addition, member states clustered informally, under certain themes. For example, in Moldova, Poland, Sweden, and Romania and, on occasions, Lithuania, coordinated together on Eastern Partnership related issues. This later led to Poland developing Polish-led meetings that ran in parallel with the meetings coordinated by the EUD. Some examples of unilateral positions are also a strong message of division not only for the EU diplomatic actors but also for the host countries. This division or in some instances isolation was visible through the refusal of some member states to participate in the common meetings. Or, when within EU framework meetings each member state gave priority to its own agenda and was preoccupied by the end-results of their individual projects, according to which they would be evaluated in their capitals.

Burden-sharing

The practice of burden-sharing in Ukraine was observed during the common meetings that led the way to complementarity among actors. A prominent example of the common approach within the HoMs meetings as well as the Political and human

rights meetings was the cooperation between member-states that resulted in the Cox-Kwasniewski mission. During this mission, both the EU delegation and the MS embassies played a key role in monitoring the local developments in the Tymoshenko case and serving as contact points for the Cox-Kwasniewski visits in Ukraine. Although coordination was more a matter for the capitals and decision-making was a matter for Brussels, what happened on the ground in Moldova was joint action. During the 2010-2015 period, there were several examples that illustrated burden-sharing in MS diplomatic activity. For instance, Germany and Sweden scaled up their assistance and they teamed-up and divided a considerable amount of money into concrete actions. Similarly, in Belarus, the example of cooperation among the EU Delegation and the member-states that resulted in the MOST project represented burden-sharing among the EUD and the German and British embassies. In contrast to interest-driven diplomacy, evidence highlights that burden-sharing is a driver in EU diplomatic performance and MS embassies and the EU delegations seem to have recognised the value of the division of labour between them.

7.5. Conclusion: dealing with foreign policy dilemmas through diplomacy

In light of the evidence presented in this thesis and the discussion of findings conducted in this chapter we now return to the three working assumptions, the research instrument employed in this thesis (as explained in section 1.3. and presented in section 2.3.2.). The thesis departed from the central research question: *to what extent has the EU developed as a successful diplomatic actor since the inauguration of the EEAS?* The discussion conducted on the international actorness of the EU in external relations more generally and in Eastern Europe specifically exposed three EU foreign policy dilemmas. The three dilemmas discussed in Chapter 2 revealed that EU has major challenges to overcome related to its goals (values vs. interests), to achieving coherence and convergence in actions (problem of collective action) and related to its political stamina and the range of instruments it uses (markets and institutions vs geopolitics). The Lisbon Treaty, by establishing a new institutional framework in diplomacy, the EEAS, was intended to address these challenges in foreign policy. As already noted in the concluding section of Chapter 2,

the general expectation in this sense was that a successful diplomatic actor should manage to solve or bypass the three dilemmas through the practice of diplomacy.

1) Post-Lisbon EU diplomacy with an institutional distinctiveness is able to articulate its own stated objectives

The expectation of this assumption was, first of all, that on the ground, the Union Delegations would fully embrace the diplomatic function of representation in all aspects of external relations, on the one hand. It also implied, on the other hand, that MS' diplomatic representations on the ground would perfectly comfortable with such a distribution of roles. Besides the Lisbon Treaty, the ENP was another reference point for this assumption as it is the umbrella-framework for the official relations between the EU and Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. Hence, the expectation of this assumption was that in Eastern Europe, there would be an ability of European and national institutions (*i.e.* EU Delegation and MS embassies) to implement the ENP's set policy goals of promoting democratic governance in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. To review this assumption, implies to reflect back on the findings collected in relation to *effectiveness*. This criterion for assessing EU diplomatic performance has facilitated analysing the EU's performance based on the evaluation of diplomatic practices on the ground against the pre-set goals in the ENP and the Lisbon Treaty. Despite the findings revealed by the first foreign policy dilemma, values vs interests, which identified a conflicting nature between the normative and material dimensions of EU foreign policy, the practice of diplomacy indicated positive developments in relation to effectiveness.

The flaws of the pre-Lisbon institutional system that were often linked to the lack of continuity and leadership were addressed through MS embracing '*symbolic representation*'. After the inauguration of EEAS, we can account for a change in diplomatic practice in Eastern Europe through the deterritorialization of diplomatic representation; this implies that MS, as members of the EU have internalised EU values, rules and norms and have welcomed the EUDs to represent the EU while their preserved their traditional national representation function. This was most obvious through the abolition, on the ground, of the system of rotating Presidencies, a task performed and coordinated post-Lisbon by the EU Delegations in Chisinau,

Kiev and Minsk. Therefore, in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus, a strong non-fragmented leadership of EUD, in this sense, was successfully acknowledged and embraced by the diplomatic community; which, in turn, strengthened continuity of EU diplomatic practice.

Furthermore, following the attribution of legal personality to the EU via the Lisbon Treaty, the EU Delegations were designed to communicate “values, policies and results of its projects toward third country stakeholders” (Duke 2013, p. 25) in cooperation with MS embassies. According to the empirical evidence presented in this thesis, *MS embassies and the EU delegations became co-participants* in pursuing, in Eastern Europe, the ENP/EaP agenda.

Data collected from the field-work conducted in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus emphasized that operationally, there was no big difference between the practices of national or EU diplomacy in reaching the efforts of supporting the democratization efforts of these countries in line with EU-stimulated reforms. In their diplomatic activities, both EU and national diplomats were involved in providing development aid assistance, monitoring and evaluating the reform agenda conducted by the three Eastern European governments. Through many of their activities, diplomats were aligned in their efforts to be of help to Moldova, Ukraine in implementing their European vocation and achieving its European aspiration. Given that Belarus did not declare such an aspiration, but since 2008 sought rapprochement in its relations with both the EU and the MS, the diplomatic community was committed to channel their bilateral interaction with Belarus in a manner that supported Belarus’ democratisation progress within the EaP framework.

2) The changes in post-Lisbon diplomacy imply convergence of member states actions and build up coherence

The second dilemma, the problem of collective action, has emphasized how disagreement among member-states or member-states and the EU can be detrimental to the EU. Divergence of member states’ interests and that of interests among Brussels institutions was the most cited reason for the dysfunctionalities of the EU’s strategy in international politics. Hence, post-Lisbon, the expectation of the second assumption was that, for the EU as a diplomatic actor, acting collectively

should become especially relevant since there was a direct emphasis on cooperation among EU Delegations and MS embassies on the ground. This was at the core of the Lisbon Treaty itself which aimed at greater coherence (*i.e.* strengthening EU coordination in external relations) which was to be achieved specifically through the cooperation between the member states' diplomatic missions and the EU delegations in third countries (Article 32 and 35 TEU and 221 TFEU). Therefore, the assumption implied that as a successful diplomatic actor the EU relied on the practice of multilateral diplomacy where cooperation is key. It is not only in Brussels that the EEAS linked national and EU diplomatic efforts but also on the ground, consequently the expectations were high in relation to this cooperation.

Performance, assessed in relation to ongoing *relevance*, the second criteria operationalised in the analytical framework (Chapter 3) produced mixed results. It was assumed that EU diplomatic actors in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus (*i.e.* EU Delegations and MS embassies) were engaging in a set of diplomatic practices that facilitated their cooperation towards formulating and implementing a 'common approach' as the Lisbon Treaty expects. Findings showed that, in Eastern Europe, there are forces that drive or divide EU diplomatic actors in this process.

The drivers for EU diplomatic performance, such as engaging in multistakeholder diplomacy, burden-sharing and bloc diplomacy were all conducive to cooperation practices on the ground. Empirical evidence showed how the openness to cooperate of EU diplomats led to avoiding overlap and complementarity through participating in *multistakeholder diplomacy*. Findings showed that in Eastern Europe, corporate diplomatic practices transitioned from a hierarchical to a *networking form of diplomacy* that anchored MS embassies on the ground in a European setting of networking. This was possible through the EUD coordinating and maintaining a network of meetings at different levels, with different topics and different degrees of ceremonialism. Evidence further spoke in favour of *burden-sharing* as a driver in EU diplomatic performance as MS embassies and the EU delegations have recognised the value of the division of labour between them. On the one hand, MS were free of the logistical burden that came with the rotating Presidency role. On the other, MS could focus their efforts on joint programming: for example, a pilot project on developing a pipeline in Moldova started in 2014 with funds from Germany, Sweden and Romania and then, the EU extended the project through a financial input.

Without the burden of coordinating the common meetings, which became a central task in the EUDs activity, the EU and the national diplomats could focus on formulating the common approach, which often meant delivering a common message or a common position vis-à-vis the local authorities in Eastern Europe. The fact that post-Lisbon there was a higher level of involvement of the EU Delegation, played a positive role in reaching the common approach. Against this background, the upgraded structural development by the Lisbon Treaty spurred convergence on the ground in a manner that led to collective action.

The diplomatic engagement and cooperation through *bloc diplomacy* was both a driver and a divider for EU diplomatic performance. As a driver, bloc diplomacy manifested by the Visegrad, Nordic and the Baltic groups in Eastern Europe, MS reached a level of agreement on common procedures (like joint programming) and were able to link efforts on offering funds to civil society. As a divider, these groups conduct activities in isolation from or in parallel with the EU common meetings. Moreover, in all three countries there were internal dividing lines within the Visegrad group, for example, with Poland usually having an opposing view and diverging towards a 'go it alone' strategy. Findings further showed that *unilateral diplomatic activities* and *interest-driven diplomacy* hampered EU diplomatic performance. As evidence revealed the approach, interest and political weight was different when sometimes different member-states would promote some people or their own interests. In Ukraine, for example, the Delegation identified that there member-states such as Poland, Romania, Slovakia or Hungary tried to influence the Delegation's positions and they were still trying to preserve their own visibility and their autonomous position. In certain cases, such as that of Great Britain, it was difficult to identify the real interest of the MS as it was saying one thing but doing something else. In Belarus, evidence showed more divergence than convergence and MS vis-à-vis the EU's decision on imposing sanctions. Some MS (Slovenia) chose to veto the EU's decision to include one Belarusian business or another on the so-called black-list based on important ongoing business/trade deals or strongly oppose economic sanctions (Lithuania).

3) The level of supranational activism through post-Lisbon diplomacy strengthens EU capabilities

The expectation of this working assumption was that a successful EU diplomatic actor may bypass or solve the foreign policy dilemma through manifesting strong capabilities on the ground. The rule-transfer vs geopolitics dilemma exposed EU's conflicting nature in choice of mechanisms in third countries – economic and legalistic versus geopolitical ones – that more often than not did not play to its advantage. The foundation of the EEAS as a new institution – referred to as the EU's diplomatic arm – meant the upgrade of Commission representations, already present in third countries, to Union Delegations. The establishment of the Service brought together the diplomatic dimension from the European Commission, the Council and the Member States under the umbrella of one institution; an institution that aimed to represent the diplomatic service of the EU on the ground via these Delegations (and its cooperation with MS embassies). It was clear that the idea behind the Lisbon Treaty from the standpoint of this dilemma was to transfer diplomatic tasks to one institution with the goal of creating a coherent and effective structure. Hence, the third assumption implied that EU diplomatic capabilities should presume a strong diplomatic esprit de corps since creating a common European diplomatic culture within the Delegations and the institutional turf-wars have been much contested. Furthermore, it was not only representing the EU on the ground that mattered here, but also the way the communication function of diplomacy was embraced, especially since the Treaty expected an increased degree of information exchange among the EU Delegations and MS embassies on the ground (art. 35).

Analysing diplomatic performance thus implies to reflect back on the findings collected in relation to *capabilities*, the third criterion. A screening of diplomatic capabilities in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus also delivered mixed results. On the one hand, the EU developed a communication infrastructure that was a valuable resource for the diplomatic community and the EUD became an informational network hub. On the other hand, evidence revealed the *struggle over symbolic power* reflected through intra- and inter-institutional tensions.

Findings showed that between 2010-2015 EU diplomatic actors engaged in a high degree of information-sharing including written and oral reports, formal and informal data, as well as exchange of personal contacts. The Delegation started to play a more central role and became an *information hub*. As interviewees disclosed, for the EUD it was important to have, on the ground, well informed diplomats, with a clear

understanding of what are the key problems to be assessed or what are the key sources of information that should be targeted by them; hence a general tendency to have the diplomatic community 'on the same page' (interv. 20). The communication infrastructure also became a resource for both parties. It was at the disposal of the member-states and could be used as a public relations tool by them, especially because MS were given access to idea-sharing and report-drafting. And a resource for the EUD: national diplomats noticed that as result of being the main coordinator of these meetings, the EUD became more valued also by local actors as this role gave the Delegation more political weight. Yet, given the MS' drive towards bloc diplomacy and unilateral diplomatic action, findings clearly suggest that the EUDs did not become 'the' network hub and the exchanged information is not exclusive to the EU, which is undermined by intra-EU blocs or 'go it alone' tactics. Nonetheless, a screening of resources further showed that the EU diplomatic actors in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus were anchored, through participating in these meetings, in a '*community of practice*'. The engagement of the diplomatic community during these meeting presented all key elements of a community of practice: ongoing mutual engagement (the practice of doing something regularly), a shared repertoire (having these meetings as a set of tools and resources) and the sense of joint enterprise (defined by members' shared sense of a common identity).

Contrary to the expectations of this assumption, observations from the fieldwork conducted in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus pointed to the fact that there is a *struggle over symbolic power* exemplified by intra- and inter-institutional tensions which were echoes of institutional dynamics in Brussels. Three specific tensions have been identified: the first is intra-EEAS tension which on the ground was present via the degree of mistrust between the staff coming from Brussels and the staff coming from the national capitals to the Political section. A second tension was related to the relationship between the EEAS and the Delegation, with information mainly being uploaded to the EEAS and the other way around. And a third one - echoed the inter-institutional dynamic between EEAS and the Commission (especially DG DevCo), where the level of cooperation was constricted by the limited degree of report-sharing or consultation on behalf of the DG DevCo personnel positioned in the Operations sections of the delegations. In addition, the diplomatic staff in the Delegation found it difficult to have two lines of reporting in Brussels – to

the EEAS and to the Commission – and saw this as creating dividing lines and separation within the Delegation.

To sum up, this chapter conducted a comparative evaluation of EU diplomatic performance of EU diplomatic performance in Eastern Europe more generally and revealed that multistakeholder diplomacy, burden-sharing, bloc diplomacy, unilateral diplomatic actions and interest-driven diplomacy as key drivers and dividers in EU's attempt to address its foreign policy dilemmas. Hence, it has put forward the empirical conclusions of this thesis and reviewed the three working assumptions set out at the beginning of this thesis that served as a research instrument. The overall conclusion, discussed in the next chapter, will deal with broader issues related with the analytical approach and the methodological consideration of this thesis, its limitations and agendas for future research.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

The post-Lisbon EU embraced the unification of the diplomatic efforts of the European Commission, the Council Secretariat and that of the EU member states with the aim of achieving greater coherence, chiefly through the establishment of the EEAS. This implied, *inter alia*, that in third countries, the former Commission representations have been transformed into Union Delegations that were mandated to represent the EU. Besides this, the Treaty changes opened an opportunity for coordination between national and EU level diplomacy in order to obtain a more effective collective effort. The 2013 review of the EEAS highlighted the enhanced partnership with the member-states (MS) as one of the EU's strengths. The 2015 EEAS strategic planning review emphasized that, against the background of the challenges in third countries, and specifically in its neighbourhood, EU diplomacy should seize the opportunity for coordination between national and EU level diplomacy in order to obtain a more effective collective effort. Therefore, the aim of this thesis was to critically assess the diplomatic performance of the European Union (EU) in its neighbourhood, namely in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus after the inauguration of the EEAS. The general research question that guided this research was *'To what extent has the EU developed as a successful diplomatic actor since the inauguration of the EEAS?'* This was not a simple question and did not necessarily translate into a simple answer, hence the lead research question required detailed examination through addressing several sub-questions. The analysis conducted in this thesis was, thus, informed by three linked sub-questions: how does one study the success of EU diplomacy, how does the EU conduct/perform its diplomatic relations in third countries after the inauguration of the EEAS, and how has the Lisbon innovation in diplomacy been manifested on the ground and has it addressed the main pre-existing challenges? While the previous chapter has put forward the empirical conclusions of this thesis, in the concluding chapter of the thesis we will take a step back and reflect on the analytical framework of this thesis and the methodology used.

The research started with an analytical literature review that aimed at unwrapping the complexity of the European Union through conceptualising the EU as an international actor. This, in turn, resulted in a discussion about what the EU

professes and how it has achieved it beyond its borders and specifically in Eastern Europe. The analysis showed that the EU's actorness faced specific challenges in its neighbourhood that entrapped it in three foreign policy dilemmas; these served as background for informing the reader about EU international actorness in Eastern Europe. Bringing forward the three foreign policy dilemmas led to proposing a set of working assumptions on how the changes that resulted from the Lisbon Treaty, with the inauguration of the EEAS, related to a successful EU as a diplomatic actor. To answer the overarching questions that guided this thesis and the working assumptions, three performance criteria were designed, namely: effectiveness, relevance and capabilities. Acknowledging the difficulties of examining performance, the three criteria were operationalised through linking, in the analytical framework, organizational studies, EU international actorness studies, the practice of diplomacy and the practice turn in international relations (IR) and EU studies.

The added value of such a framework is first of all *interdisciplinarity*. Organisational studies, more generally, are interested in what people actually do. Coupling a practice turn with organisational studies in our analytical framework (Chapter 3) served as a bridge for different levels of analysis, as scholars have already emphasized, this links “the very micro (what people say and do); to the meso (routines); to the macro (institutions)” (Miettinen et al., 2009, p. 1309). Furthermore, as emphasized in the analytical framework, academic scholarship has also started to acknowledge the importance of looking at practices, especially because it allows to uncover everyday practices that are not, usually, the focus of scholarly research. A practice-oriented approach gave the opportunity to understand what was happening on the ground. Since there is limited scholarly knowledge on what is happening in diplomacy on the ground, incorporating practices in this analytical framework gave the opportunity to discover otherwise practices that are of importance to the general knowledge of EU diplomatic performance.

Hence, this analytical framework adds value through *creating synergies* between organisational management, diplomatic studies and the practice approach and creating *cross-fertilization*. Research by Pouliot and Cornout (2015) has also argued in favour of a cross-fertilising exchange between these strands of literature and indicated three avenues in this regard: *continuity and change*; *rationality and*

practicality and the *balance between the social and the technical*. This thesis goes along similar lines. Performance, diplomacy and practice, which more generally tend to reproduce themselves, are also subject to co-existing forces of continuity and change. Assessing performance, through our analytical framework started from uncovering what practitioners actually do, the ways in which they create functional patterns of interaction based on the already established ways of doing things. One example of this was the way in which the practice of engaging in common EU meetings anchored the diplomatic community in a community of practice. The way in which *MS embassies and the EU delegations became co-participants* in pursuing the ENP/EaP agenda on the ground speaks for rationality and practicality. Simply put, national diplomats on the ground mirrored the internalization of EU rules via their own process of European integration, therefore, although their national interest may diverge and lock them in interest-driven diplomacy, at the end of the day, both rationality and the practice of being a EU MS worked hand in hand and not against each other; thus their diplomatic efforts in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus were to support democratization efforts of these countries based on their relationship with the EU. As the empirical discussion emphasized in Chapter 7, through their diplomatic activity, national and EU diplomats are constantly involved in establishing a balance between the social and the technical. Through their various forms of interaction within common EU meetings or the regional frameworks (the three groups), diplomats skilfully combine aid-driven diplomacy with *démarches* and political statements towards the local governments.

Secondly, there is an added value in the empirical findings of this thesis as it *contributes to the academic literature* on performance, practice and diplomacy generally and to EU diplomatic performance in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus specifically (at the moment of writing this thesis, there is currently no literature on this subject). Looking at performance facilitated examining and evaluating EU diplomatic practices against pre-set goals as well as understanding how everyday practices inform the EU's actions. It also allowed us to explore the relationship between national and EU levels in the new post-Lisbon setting, where the EU delegations perform traditional and new diplomatic functions: representing the Union and also cooperating with national embassies. And, it allowed us to conduct a screening of capabilities and to understand how these pertain to the diplomatic realm. Whereas

the Brussels-based part of the EEAS has captured the attention of both academic and non-academic literature, through turning its focus to the performance and diplomatic practice of the EU in third countries, i.e. Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus, this thesis adds to the scarce scholarly literature in this field.

A screening of research on theorising the EU's diplomatic service found that much of the academic study (of the EEAS) was surprisingly atheoretical with 30% of publications between 2005 and 2014 having no explicit theoretical framework (Adler-Niessen, 2015). Some may argue that this thesis may fall under the same category. Yet, the aim here was to go beyond positivist explanations and to explore the details of everyday practices that form and shape the performance of any actor. For that reason we designed an interdisciplinary analytical tool and embraced a *qualitative research-design* based on exploratory case studies. In the case of the case-studies for this research, field-work was conducted after the establishment of the research questions but prior to defining the assumptions, especially important when investigating diplomacy, i.e. the practice of diplomacy. And, as some scholars emphasized, it "is not primarily about theory, but about the practice of doing research" (Bueger, 2014; p. 385; Lequesne, 2015). Such an *exploratory investigation*, then, captured the relationship between the actions and the agents and facilitated a broader understanding of diplomacy specifically through an interpretative approach of the everyday work of diplomats. Conducting interviews allowed us to firstly uncover, to a certain extent, the complexity of their knowledge; and secondly, through developing a set of follow-up exploratory research questions, during the fieldwork itself, to understand and identify forces that drive and divide EU diplomatic performance. Developing such a research design did not allow us to take certain things for granted, such as the role of rules and norms in the diplomatic interactions, but rather endorsed our understanding of how, through diplomatic practices, rules and norms are shaped by what diplomats themselves consider normal and meaningful.

While the use of data from *interviews* adds strength to the analysis of this thesis, no research is free from error and questions of *validity and reliability* arose. The main difficulty resided in the inability to access all EU and national diplomats present in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. As a consequence, the empirical chapters portray an

unproportioned discovery on the practice of diplomacy. This was particularly obvious in Belarus (Chapter 6) where the circumstances for conducting the interviews were more difficult as diplomats stated, off the record, that their offices were tapped by the local government (as explained in section 1.3.). Taking this into consideration, we used triangulation, and backed-up the data from interviews against each other (where possible) to cross-check findings. Given that there is no previous research conducted on the practice and performance of diplomacy in Moldova, Ukraine or Belarus, it was impossible cross-check findings from the interviews with data from secondary sources. Another limitation in embracing an exploratory case-study investigation, although it helped advance knowledge on the subject under investigation, is that it is exploratory. As Yin (1993) explains, “the major problem with exploratory case studies is that the data collected during the pilot phase are then also used as part of any ensuing case study” (p. 6). To minimize the analytical effect of this limitation, process-tracing was used as an analytical device. It helped obtain information about well-defined and specific events and processes and inductively use the evidence collected to develop the working assumptions. Hence data extracted from the elite interviews has been corroborated against other interviews, policy papers, Commission and EEAS reports, newspaper articles and existing academic literature.

Our findings showed that in Eastern Europe, corporate diplomatic practices were bound by context or, as Adler-Niessen (2008) defined it – the diplomatic field. Through its empirical contribution, of probing working assumptions in three immediate EU neighbours, it becomes difficult to make *generalisations* regarding the EaP countries to which they belong. For example, the stratification of the diplomatic field in Eastern Europe, understood as a social system consisting of a patterned set of practices, was defined by the political development of relations between the three countries and the EU. We cannot infer, at this point, that the same holds valid for South Caucasus neighbours, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. In order to do so, further research on the EaP countries (including a comparative analysis) in order to examine EU diplomatic performance in the EaP is needed. Subsequently, to make generalizations, a categorization of the countries should be undertaken in most-likely and least-likely cases. Therefore, based on the political relations with the EU, Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia could be most-likely cases, while Belarus, Armenia

and Azerbaijan least-likely cases. Additionally, the validity and reliability of the findings presented regarding effectiveness, relevance and capabilities may also be tested against alternative criteria. The empirical data presented in the thesis indicates that scholars should pay more attention to the diplomatic field in which the EU is exercising diplomacy.

Another limitation of this research relates to its limited cross-fertilisation with the European integration and Europeanisation literature. While Europeanisation was not the focus of the study it is worth noting that the findings presented in this thesis offer great potential for exploring several processes. A discussion of the drivers and dividers of EU diplomatic performance could benefit from cross-fertilisation on the discussion of the drivers of European integration literature that often captured certain cause-effect relationships (for example Exadaktylos & Radaeilli, 2012). In this sense it would also be fruitful to compare these findings with the Big Bang enlargement progress and evaluate to which extent the legal and institutional relationship between the partner countries and the EU drive or hamper EU diplomatic performance. Given that the style of this relationship is driven by conditionality, literature on enlargement has already showed that EU rule-transfer is more effective when linked to concrete rewards in form of EU membership, but also EU financial and technical assistance or association agreements. Therefore, the findings of this research would benefit from a follow-up investigation that would discuss how effectiveness, relevance and capabilities as dimensions of performance would have been influenced (positively or negatively) by the progress towards the AA. And, to a similar extent – whether the available ENP tools are designed in a manner that offer a clear link between conditions and rewards and have a power to shape EU diplomatic performance. Furthermore, an intersection with the social-constructivist scholarship on European identity, socialization and learning would be analytically beneficial to understand how communities of practice, such as those present in EU diplomacy in Eastern Europe, foster learning and socialisation processes through cooperation within EU common meetings.

While literature on EU's role in international affairs has significantly developed in the last four decades (Allen & Smith, 1990, 1998; Jupille & Caporasso, 1998; Ginsberg, 2001; Bretherton & Vogler, 2006 and others), there are still few studies of the EU as

a diplomatic actor that analyse the process, policies and outcomes of the EU's diplomatic actorness. Scholarly research dedicated to exploring and unpacking the notion of EU performance has also been scarce. Notable examples include the studies that analyse EU performance in multilateral institutions (Oberthür *et al.* 2013; Jørgensen & Laatikainen 2013); with focus on EU impact, EU role performance, EU legitimacy and EU effectiveness in international affairs (Smith 2000; Ginsberg 2001; Van Schaik 2013; Elgström & Smith 2006; Bickerton 2007; Smith 2010b; Vasilyan 2011; Smith 2013; Romanyshyn 2015; Baltag & Smith 2015); on EU effectiveness (Edwards 2013; Bouchard *et al.* 2013; Smith 2013; Bretherton & Vogler 2013; Smith 2010; Lavanex & Schimmelfennig 2011; Börzel & Risse 2007). Also, scholars have examined the EU's performance in major multilateral settings (Oberthür & Groen 2015; Jørgensen *et al.*, 2013), and during negotiations in different policy settings (Romanyshyn 2015; Dee 2015; van Schaik 2013). Recent scholarship has started to assess the EU as a diplomatic actor post-Lisbon (Koops & Macaj, 2015), the evolution, change and challenges of the diplomatic system of the EU (Carta, 2012; Duke *et al.*, 2012; Henökl, 2014; Pomorska & Juncos, 2014; Balfour, Carta & Raik, 2015; Smith, Keukeleire & Vanhoonacker, 2016) and more recently EU diplomatic performance (Baltag & Smith 2015; Baltag, 2018), EU diplomatic practice (Adler-Nissen, 2014; Pouliot & Cornout, 2015; Bicchi & Bremberg, 2016) and EU diplomatic cooperation aboard (Bicchi & Maurer, 2018).

An inherent next step in promoting research on EU diplomatic practice and performance, which results from this thesis, would be to further investigate the drivers and dividers of EU diplomatic performance. Whereas the findings here have uncovered and discussed them, future research could discuss their potential to influence, positively or negatively, EU diplomatic performance in key policy fields in post-Lisbon era. The findings presented in Chapter 7 raise important questions concerning the extent to which EU diplomatic actors can support the progress in the ENP countries towards “deep democracy” when there is interest-driven diplomacy and unilateral diplomatic actions combined with certain collaborative action among them. Firstly, it is questionable how the EU can achieve better coherence in its actions externally if it has deficiencies in engaging in joint actions. Secondly, how can EU diplomatic actors on the ground influence local governments when there are limited political *démarches* or policy-driven discussions and when there is divergence

of member states' opinions that can lead to bloc diplomacy or 'go it alone' tactics? A further avenue for research is to uncover further patterns of corporate diplomatic practices. The high involvement of both MS embassies and the EUDs in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus anchored the EU diplomatic actors in a community of practice. This is a community based on practice that develops, through its activities, a specific identity and a set of resources specific to the group. Since all parties are willing to engage in an increased level of communication through reporting and information-sharing, one set of questions can examine how substantive cooperation happens within the common EU framework. A second one, can examine the role of the communities of practice for developing the EU foreign policy system. Whereas diplomats are mainly tasked with implementing foreign policy objectives, the life cycle of a policy implies a feedback loop through which diplomats can evaluate and also upload points to the agenda-setting for a new or adapted policy.

The shift of the diplomatic interaction from a hierarchical to a network form of diplomacy opens another avenue for research. Whereas network diplomacy per se is hardly a new concept, findings here have shown that diplomats engage in multistakeholder diplomacy, therefore further evidence needs to be collected in order to evaluate the role, rules and norms as well as the impact of such type of diplomacy on the ground. Of particular interest for such an investigation could be understanding the patterns of 'co-opetition', the practice when a mix between cooperation and competition is taking place among actors involved in EU diplomacy. On the one hand, there is an increased variety of foreign policy actors involved in diplomacy outside the Delegations, such as the Heads of Governments, the President of the European Council, the European parliamentarians, civil society organisations and others. An examination of their patterns of co-opetition with the Delegation in Eastern Europe would add value to understanding the practice of diplomacy. On the other hand, this could further be linked to an examination of bloc diplomacy. As a driver of diplomatic performance, the Visegrad, Nordic and Baltic groups had a high degree of interactions that generated solutions to common problems, generated bloc support and provided them with an advanced expertise on bloc coordination. Hence, research could question how and under what conditions, the latter upgrade (or not) their practice to the EU level and with what effects. In addition, and specific to the fact that diplomacy is conducted in third countries, further research on the power of

EU structural diplomacy and on the use of diplomatic capital presents an opportunity for research.

Against the background of growing diplomatic capabilities on the ground without addressing its flaws, it is questionable whether such accumulated capital enables the EU to pursue a coherent diplomatic presence. Against this background, future research should scrutinize further whether the post-Lisbon changes and the EU system of diplomacy are 'fit for purpose' in reaching sustainable ENP/EaP policy objectives. Moreover, investigating to what extent the Lisbon Treaty innovations were the main driving force for effectiveness, relevance and capabilities would allow discovery of other factors that are just as important for EU diplomatic performance. Research on EU performance in the CEE and Eastern Europe has already demonstrated that EU's performance "cannot be isolated from local and international factors that mediate its engagement with partners" (Papadimitriou et al., 2017, p.5). Our findings have already emphasized that MS unilateral actions are a divider for EU diplomatic performance. Cross-fertilization with research done by Papadimitriou et al (2017) can help uncover how "the timing and tempo of the EU's engagement with third countries are an important determinant of its performance, affecting processes of policy learning and conditioning its response during crisis management" (ibidem, p. 7). It can also furthermore show how significant international "veto players" such as the Russian Federation, may limit the scope or compromise EU diplomatic performance. As empirical evidence discussed in Chapter 7 showed, in Eastern Europe, EU diplomatic performance is described by the mode of aid-driven diplomacy and a high degree of path dependency, hence, a next step to conduct research would regard hypothesising the Lisbon Treaty (and its innovations) as an independent variable and exploring other factors such as aid-driven diplomacy or the presence of veto-players as intervening variables in discussing EU diplomatic performance.

To conclude, this thesis would like to consider certain policy implications of the research findings. Policy implications add a holistic lens to the meaning and interpretation of this research beyond the academic discussion and show how these results can be applied to practice. Given that practice was the unit of analysis of this thesis, it constituted the object of the knowledge that scholars develop on EU

diplomacy generally. Therefore, we strongly believe that such a thesis can contribute to building bridges between scholarship and the practitioner's world. Based on the findings of this thesis we propose the following policy recommendations:

- To develop the diplomatic capabilities within the EUD vis-à-vis coordination with MS. To achieve a better coordination, the establishment of a Secretariat that would deal with coordination between MS embassies and the EU delegations in neighbour countries would be beneficial. This can be done through creating a post of a 'manager for coordination' or a 'coordinator for cooperation'. Such a post already exists in the EUD in Kiev, but its dossier deals with coordination with Ukrainian authorities, not among EU member states.
- To ensure consistent attendance at meetings. The EUDs and the MS embassies should make certain meetings mandatory in terms of attendance, especially those of particular importance for the political developments in the three countries studied.
- Given the aid-driven character of diplomacy, which is not a novel practice, the common meetings should upgrade from information-sharing to programme alignment and implementation of common projects.
- The EUDs should pursue a dialogue with the regional cooperation networks such as Visegrad, Nordic Plus and the Baltics in order to foster joint collaborations and share best practices.
- Member states should upload their practices not only to the regional but also to the EU level, especially since bloc diplomacy in Eastern Europe presented a relatively high degree of cooperation.
- The EUDs should map all EU actors in the neighbour countries and consider the expertise of particular member states (depending on the region or country). Findings here showed that MS pursue interest-driven diplomacy especially in the cases where they feel they have the expertise and know-how and add value. To avoid divergence and spur convergence, designing a spreadsheet that indicates the exclusive expertise of individual MS diplomats present on the ground would be beneficial.

Last but not least, contextualising the findings of this thesis within previous research and exploring the avenues for future research helps readers to grasp the

significance of our research. Hence, as part of reflecting on what these findings mean, the thesis thus has implications not only for the development of theory and empirical analysis but also for practice itself.

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Annexes

Annex 1: List of conducted interviews 2011-2016, EU diplomatic community in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus

Respondents agreed to offer interviews based on the fact that all interviews were made anonymous, that their name and position will not be made available to the general public. While the position of the interviewees are provided to internal and external examiners only, these are kept CONFIDENTIAL, in this annex. Diplomats asked not to disclose their names.

Nr	Date	Country	Dipl. Repr.	EEAS/Comm/MS/Local
1.	11.03.2011	Moldova	EU Delegation	Commission/local staff
2.	14.03.2011	Moldova	Embassy of Germany	MS
3.	14.03.2011	Moldova	Embassy of Czech Republic	MS
4.	15.03.2011	Moldova	Embassy of Poland	MS
5.	15.03.2011	Moldova	Embassy of Poland	Local staff
6.	16.03.2011	Moldova	Embassy of the United Kingdom	Local staff
7.	21.03.2011	Ukraine	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands	MS
8.	21.03.2011	Ukraine	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands	MS
9.	21.03.2011	Ukraine	Embassy of the United Kingdom	Local staff
10.	21.03.2011	Ukraine	Embassy of the United Kingdom	Local staff
11.	21.03.2011	Ukraine	Embassy of the United Kingdom	Local staff
12.	22.03.2011	Moldova	Embassy of Poland	MS
13.	22.03.2011	Ukraine	Embassy of the Kingdom of Sweden	MS
14.	23.03.2011	Ukraine	Embassy of Denmark	MS
15.	23.03.2011	Ukraine	EU Delegation	Commission
16.	12.11.2013	Ukraine	EU Delegation	Commission
17.	12.11.2013	Ukraine	Embassy of Lithuania	MS
18.	13.11.2013	Ukraine	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands	MS

19.	13.11.2013	Ukraine	EU Delegation	EEAS
20.	13.11.2013	Ukraine	EU Delegation	Commission
21.	14.11.2013	Ukraine	Embassy of Poland	MS
22.	14.11.2013	Ukraine	Embassy of Sweden	MS
23.	14.11.2013	Ukraine	EU Delegation	EEAS
24.	15.11.2013	Ukraine	Embassy of Czech Republic	MS
25.	17.11.2013	Moldova	EU Delegation	Commission/local staff
26.	17.11.2013	Moldova	EU Delegation	EEAS
27.	19.11.2013	Moldova	Embassy of Lithuania	MS
28.	20.11.2013	Moldova	Embassy of Poland	MS
29.	20.11.2013	Moldova	Embassy of Poland	MS
30.	22.11.2013	Moldova	Embassy of United Kingdom	MS
31.	22.11.2013	Moldova	EU Delegation	Commission
32.	22.11.2013	Moldova	EU Delegation	Commission
33.	10.09.2014	Belarus	EU Delegation	EEAS
34.	11.09.2014	Belarus	Embassy of Slovakia	MS
35.	11.09.2014	Belarus	Embassy of Finland	MS
36.	16.09.2014	Belarus	Embassy of United Kingdom	MS
37.	16.09.2014	Belarus	Embassy of Romania	MS
38.	25.06.2015	Moldova	Embassy of Sweden	MS
39.	25.06.2015	Moldova	Embassy of Germany	MS
40.	25.06.2015	Moldova	Embassy of France	MS
41.	26.06.2015	Moldova	Embassy of Romania	MS
42.	14.06.2016	Ukraine	Embassy of Latvia	MS
43.	14.06.2016	Ukraine	Embassy of Belgium	MS
44.	15.06.2016	Ukraine	Embassy of Austria	MS
45.	15.06.2016	Ukraine	Embassy of Finland	MS
46.	15.06.2016	Ukraine	Embassy of Denmark	MS
47.	16.06.2015	Ukraine	Embassy of Germany	MS
48.	17.06.2015	Ukraine	EU Delegation	EEAS

Annex 2: List of conducted interviews with civil servants and civil society representatives

Respondents agreed to offer interviews based on the fact that all interviews were made anonymous, that their name and position will not be made available to the general public. While the name and position of the interviewees are provided to internal and external examiners only, these are kept CONFIDENTIAL, in this annex.

Moldova

Nr	Date	Respondents function
MD-1	17-09-2013	External consultant to the MFA (UNDP contracted) / Building the Institutional Capacity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Project
MD-2	17-09-2013	Civil servant, State Chancellery / local public administration reforms on decentralisation & financial autonomy
MD-3	17-09-2013	Attaché, MFA / analysis, monitoring and evaluation of policies unit
MD-4	20-09-2013	Former vice-minister of regional development and construction
MD-5	20-09-2013	Consultant, Cabinet of the President
MD-6	21-09-2013	Ministry of Justice, Chief of Cabinet of the Ministry of Justice
MD-8	23-09-2013	Former MFA, migration and development policies and programs / current ICMPD Project officer on Supporting the Implementation of the EC Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements in Moldova and Georgia (REVIS)
MD-9	24-09-2013	Minister-counsellor, Moldova's mission to the EU, Brussels
MD-10	24-09-2013	Secretary I, Moldova's mission to the EU, Brussels
MD-11	07-10-2013	Counsellor, minister of Internal Affairs
MD-12	18-10-2013	Chief of External Assistance Department, State Chancellery
MD-13	20-09-2013	Head of external relations department
MD-15	19-09-2013	Associated expert analyst at Expert-grup; former coordinator www.europa.md
MD-16	20-09-2013	Senior analyst European Union Institute for Security Studies / former analysts at the European Council on Foreign Relations / former Advisor to the Moldovan Prime Minister 2010; 2012
MD-17	18-09-2013	Program Officer at East Europe Foundation / national coordinator of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, Work Group People to People Contacts, Education and Culture / liaison with MFA on DCFTA and visa liberalisation negotiations / former EUBAM 'Liaison and Border Risk Analysis Office' project assistant

MD-18	18-09-2013	IOM National Adviser to the Moldovan Border Police Department / consulting the government on the EU thematic programme on Migration and Asylum in the "Strengthening Migration Management and Cooperation on Readmission in Eastern Europe (MIGRECO)
MD-19	19-09-2013	Public policy consultant at the national participation council / Tracking the implementation of the Government Program and Action Plan in 2012 / former assistant in EU Twinning Project on Intellectual Property Rights
MD-20	20-09-2013	Promo-Lex NGO: HR, monitoring, advocacy, Transnistria conflict issues
MD-21	23-09-2013	National legal consultant / Norwegian mission of rule of law advisors to Moldova

Ukraine

Nr	Date	Respondents function
UKR-1	15-05-2014	Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine
UKR-2	15-05-2014	Deputy director general, Razumkov Centre
UKR-3	15-05-2014	Director, Institute of World Policy
UKR-4	15-05-2014	Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine
UKR-5	15-05-2014	Vice President of Policy, The American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine; ex-member of Ukrainian team of negotiators on EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and DCFTA (confirmed)
UKR-6	15-05-2014	First Deputy Minister of Justice of Ukraine
UKR-7	15-05-2014	Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine
UKR-8	15-05-2014	Head, Civic organization Europe without Barriers
UKR-9	15-05-2014	Directorate General for the European Union, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine
UKR-10	16-05-2014	senior-research fellow, Institute of World Policy
UKR-11	17-05-2014	RTA, Ministry of Social Policy
UKR-12	17-05-2014	Deputy, Ministry of Defense
UKR-13	17-05-2014	First Deputy Chairman of the Committee of the Verkhovna Rada on issues of European integration

UKR-14	18-05-2014	Civil society representative Donetsk region
UKR-15	18-05-2014	Civil society representative Lvov
UKR-16	18-05-2014	Civil society representative Odessa region

Belarus

Nr	Date	Respondents function
BEL-1	15-05-2012	Manager, Officer for Democratic Belarus
BEL-2	15-05-2014	Executive director, Officer for Democratic Belarus
BEL-3	15-09-2014	Executive director, Liberal Club Belarus
BEL-4	15-09-2014	Officer, European Cafe Belarus
BEL-5	17-09-2014	Student Union representative, Mogilev University

Annex 3: Interview guide

All interviews followed the guide presented below, lasted 60 minutes on average and were thereafter codified (see details in Annex 4) and made anonymous. The elite interviews were conducted in a semi-structured form, where questions were asked of each interviewee in a systematic and consistent order, but the interviewers were allowed freedom to digress and reflected on their diplomatic practice.

Interview guide, diplomatic community (semi-structured)

1. What does diplomacy mean to you and your daily activity at the mission?
2. Reflecting on your diplomatic activity in this country, how do they specifically reflect the ENP/EaP agenda?
3. Has the Lisbon Treaty changed or affected in any way the activity of your mission and how?
4. One of the provisions within the Lisbon Treaty is that EU diplomatic actors in third countries: “shall cooperate and shall contribute to formulating and implementing the common approach” How is this understood and practiced by you?
5. Could you please provide some examples of this EU-member states ‘common approach’ in Moldova/Ukraine/Belarus?
6. Could you please explain, based on your experience at the embassy, the cooperation between the EU delegation and your mission?
7. Based on your interactions with the EU Delegation, what role does it play in Moldova/Ukraine/Belarus?
8. What type of resources does the Delegation provide in order to foster cooperation with and among member-states?
9. How are these resources used by you specifically?
10. Could you name some of the instances when was reluctance on behalf of the EU delegation or member-state embassies to cooperate?

Interview guide, civil servants and (semi-structured)

1. Would you characterize the cooperation agreements with the EU to be broad or limited?
2. How many areas do the co-operation with the EU cover ?
3. Which areas of cooperation do you perceive as the most important for your country and why?

4. To what extent has your country adapted to EU rules (in the chapters that are actually covered in the partnership/association agreements) and norms (in particularly the ENP criteria concerning democracy promotion, respect for human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development)?
5. What is the main motivation behind these adjustments?
6. To what extent are these adjustments implemented and followed up?
7. Have they led to institutional changes? If so, could you give examples of that?
8. Does the level of adaptation vary according to different policy areas? If so, could you give some examples?
9. How often and at what level does your country participate in meeting with the EU?
10. Is there a unit in your country that coordinate this participation?
11. How would you consider the level of participation in EU programs and policies?
12. What kind of participation do we talk about – active participation in specific EU policies? Contributions in terms of various forms of human, economic or technical resources? Or more passive participation like being observers at meetings etc?
13. Could you mention some kind of participation that you consider to be particularly important and explain why?
14. Would you say that there is a support for in your country (among both the political leadership and the most important constituencies) for a closer integration with the EU within the framework of the ENP? Why/Why not?
15. How important is the economic support coming from the EU for the development and stability in your country?

Annex 4: RQDA and its application

RDQA is a free software package for Qualitative Data Analysis, which works on Windows. It is an easy to use tool to assist in the analysis of textual data which, at the moment, only supports plain text formatted data. More details on RQDA can be found here: <http://rqda.r-forge.r-project.org/>

The Interview data analysis has been done via RQDA that allowed sorting and memo-ing of a bigger interview data-set as well as coding the interviews. Using this qualitative social research tool provided with the technical methodology for systematizing, organizing, and analysing the interviews. This was done in the following 4 steps:

Step 1: Creating a Project. At this step 3 projects were created that corresponded with the three countries where interviews were conducted: Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus.

Step 2: Uploading files. For every project, a number of files, corresponding to the number of interviews per country were uploaded to the software. Each file is labelled according to the number of the interview and contains all answers collected from all respondents.

Step 3: Coding Data. This process implies creating the codes and then applying them to each file individually. After the fieldwork-conducted in the three countries a list of codes, corresponding to the three criteria were created as presented in Table 29 below. Codes were derived from the operationalisation of the three criteria: effectiveness, relevance and capabilities. Also, the general interview guide served and the answers of the respondents served as reference point (see Annex 3).

<i>Effectiveness</i>	<i>Relevance</i>	<i>Capabilities</i>
EFF_LisbonTreaty	REL_commonapproach	CAP_communication
EFF_EUDrole	REL_MS-EUDcooperation	CAP_humanresources
EFF_ENP	REL_MS-MScooperation	CAP_institutional

If in case of the first two criteria, effectiveness and relevance, these codes were identified via operationalisation; in the case of the third criteria, it was possible to create the codes based on operationalisation in congruence with the respondents interviews. For example, we codified 'CAP_institutional', only after the field-work was conducted and respondents identified that the intra- and inter-institutional tensions were an issue. Each code was represented through abbreviations: EFF stands for effectiveness, REL stands for relevance and CAP stands for capabilities (as shown in the Table).

Step 4: Exporting codes. A final step was to export codified data into separate files that corresponded to the three criteria effectiveness, relevance and capabilities. These, in turn, were introduced in the discussion of the empirical chapters on Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus (Chapter 4, 5 and 6).

Besides facilitating the management of transcribed interview data, this package assisted the identification and codification of data which served as base for the discussion of findings, presented in Chapter 7. In this manner, we were able to better identify the forces that drive or divide EU diplomatic performance.

