



House of Commons  
Foreign Affairs Committee

---

# The UK staff presence in the EU institutions

---

**Second Report of Session 2013–14**

*Report, together with formal minutes and  
written evidence*

*Ordered by the House of Commons  
to be printed 25 June 2013*

## The Foreign Affairs Committee

The Foreign Affairs Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and its associated agencies.

### Current membership

Richard Ottaway (*Conservative, Croydon South*) (*Chair*)  
Mr John Baron (*Conservative, Basildon and Billericay*)  
Rt Hon Sir Menzies Campbell (*Liberal Democrat, North East Fife*)  
Rt Hon Ann Clwyd (*Labour, Cynon Valley*)  
Mike Gapes (*Labour/Co-op, Ilford South*)  
Mark Hendrick (*Labour/Co-op, Preston*)  
Sandra Osborne (*Labour, Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock*)  
Andrew Rosindell (*Conservative, Romford*)  
Mr Frank Roy (*Labour, Motherwell and Wishaw*)  
Rt Hon Sir John Stanley (*Conservative, Tonbridge and Malling*)  
Rory Stewart (*Conservative, Penrith and The Border*)

The following Members were also members of the Committee during the Parliament:

Rt Hon Bob Ainsworth (*Labour, Coventry North East*)  
Emma Reynolds (*Labour, Wolverhampton North East*)  
Mr Dave Watts (*Labour, St Helens North*)

### Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 152. These are available on the internet via [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk).

### Publication

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including news items) are on the internet at [www.parliament.uk/facom](http://www.parliament.uk/facom). A list of Reports of the Committee in the present Parliament is at the front of this volume.

### Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Kenneth Fox (Clerk), Peter McGrath (Second Clerk), Zoe Oliver-Watts (Senior Committee Specialist), Dr Brigid Fowler (Committee Specialist), Louise Glen (Senior Committee Assistant), Vanessa Hallinan (Committee Assistant), and Alex Paterson (Media Officer).

### Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Foreign Affairs Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 6105; the Committee's email address is [FAC@parliament.uk](mailto:FAC@parliament.uk).

# Contents

---

<b>Report</b>	<i>Page</i>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Conclusions and recommendations</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2 The UK staff presence in the EU institutions</b>	<b>9</b>
Nationals in the EU institutions as a source of Member State influence	9
UK nationals on the staff of the EU institutions: situation in 2013	10
Government action	13
<i>Concours</i>	13
Seconded national experts (SNEs)	17
European External Action Service (EEAS)	18
EU membership uncertainty?	23
<b>Formal Minutes</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>List of written evidence</b>	<b>25</b>



## Summary

During our recent inquiry into *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, witnesses identified UK nationals on the staff of the EU institutions as one of the potential sources of UK influence in the EU. We gathered a significant body of data, principally from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), on the size of, and developments in, the UK staff presence in the EU institutions. We were sufficiently struck by what we found to decide to publish the information we had gathered and our conclusions as this short separate Report, in order to give the issue greater accessibility and prominence.

The Government is correct to have identified both the importance of UK personnel on the staff of the EU institutions as a channel for UK influence in the EU, and the fact that the UK faces a serious problem with respect to its declining representation among EU staff. We commend the Government for launching an effort to increase the UK staff presence in the EU institutions.

However, the Government's efforts are not so far reversing the decline in the UK presence. In relation to its share of the EU's population (12.5%), the UK remains significantly under-represented among the staff of the major EU institutions, and its presence continues to shrink. We were seriously concerned to learn that the number of UK nationals on the staff of the European Commission has fallen by 24% in seven years, and now stands at 4.6% of the total. This compares to 9.7% for France, which has almost the same share of the EU's population. In the increasingly-powerful European Parliament, the UK's share of administrator-grade staff has fallen from 6.2% to 5.8% since 2010 (while France's has risen from 7.5% to 8.6%); and in the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU the UK's share of administrator-grade staff fell from 4.8% to 4.3% over the same period (while France's fell from 7.7% to 6.9%).

The chief cause of the current decline is the fact that, forty years after the UK joined the then-European Economic Community in 1973, the cohort of UK officials who went then to work for the EU institutions (especially the European Commission) is reaching retirement age. The UK staff presence at middle-ranking and more junior and entry levels in the Commission is insufficient to compensate for the exit of senior UK officials. Even if UK representation at entry levels were to start to pick up, the Government must therefore reckon with what the Foreign Secretary has correctly identified as a 'generation gap' in the UK presence in the European Commission, and with declining UK representation at the most senior levels there in the medium term.

In the entrance exam to become permanent EU officials, the pass rate among UK candidates appears to be roughly the same as for the EU as a whole, although we were concerned to note that it is on a downward trend. We were also disconcerted to discover that the Civil/Diplomatic Service European Fast Stream programme, which is intended to prepare candidates to enter the competition successfully, appears so far to have generated no additional permanent generalist EU officials for the UK since it was re-launched in 2010. We welcome signs that more UK nationals are becoming interested in embarking on careers as permanent EU officials. However, given the pass rate, the numbers of UK candidates for the entrance exam remain too low (2.4% of the total in 2012) to compensate for the numbers of UK retirees.

With respect to the EU's new European External Action Service (EEAS), we endorse the view taken by our predecessor Committee, namely that it will be to the benefit of the FCO and the UK if high-quality UK diplomats and other civil servants undertake secondments into the EEAS and then return to UK service. While we recognise that FCO and Civil Service financial and staff resources are strained, it must be to the UK's benefit to have UK officials in key EEAS positions and to gather first-hand experience of the new Service to feed back into Whitehall. The requirement that one-third of policy jobs in the EEAS must go to national diplomats seconded from the Member States appears to be enabling the UK to have a slightly larger share of the staff of the new Service than of other EU institutions. However, the number of such jobs remains limited, and UK candidates face tough competition to secure them. We endorse the FCO's strategy of seeking to target EEAS jobs of particular potential importance for the UK, although it must do so without risking UK candidates being seen as representatives purely of UK interests. As UK diplomats move through their periods of secondment to the EEAS, we recommend that the FCO should focus on maximising the prospect that they will return to UK service.

We welcome the creation of an EU Staffing Unit in the FCO with a remit to increase secondments of UK civil servants into the EU institutions. We recommend that, as it develops its plans for Civil Service reform, the Government should ensure that undertaking secondments into the EU institutions will be encouraged and recognised.

We further recommend that the FCO should report annually to Parliament on the numbers of UK nationals working for the main EU institutions, and the representation and performance of UK nationals in the EU staff entrance competition (the *concours*). This is warranted by the importance of the issue for UK influence in the EU, the resources that the FCO is devoting to increasing the numbers of UK personnel working for the EU, and the difficulty otherwise of compiling relevant published data from multiple sources. Such an annual publication could also act as an indicator if the Prime Minister's commitment that a Conservative Government after 2015 would hold an 'in/out' referendum on the UK's continued EU membership were to weaken the willingness of UK nationals to pursue EU careers.

# Conclusions and recommendations

---

## UK nationals on the staff of the EU institutions: situation in 2013

1. In relation to its share of the EU's population, the UK is significantly under-represented among the staff of the major EU institutions (Council, Commission and Parliament). We were seriously concerned to learn that the number of UK nationals on the staff of the European Commission has fallen by 24% in seven years. The UK now fields 4.6% of Commission staff, compared to its 12.5% share of the EU's population; France's shares are 13.0% of the EU population and 9.7% of Commission staff. In the increasingly-powerful European Parliament, the UK's share of administrator-grade staff has fallen from 6.2% to 5.8% since 2010 (while France's has risen from 7.5% to 8.6%); and in the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU the UK's share of administrator-grade staff fell from 4.8% to 4.3% over the same period (while France's fell from 7.7% to 6.9%). (Paragraph 11)

## Government action

### Concours

2. The Government is correct to have identified both the importance of UK personnel on the staff of the EU institutions as a channel for UK influence in the EU, and the fact that the UK faces a serious problem with respect to its declining representation among EU staff. We commend the Government for launching an effort to increase the UK staff presence in the EU institutions. (Paragraph 18)
3. The Government is taking steps to try to increase both the number and the success rate of UK entrants to the competition to become permanent EU officials:
  - The entry competition for new permanent EU officials is tough. As regards the success rate, among UK entrants it appears to be roughly the same as for the EU as a whole, although we were concerned to note that it is on a downward trend. We were especially disconcerted to discover that the Civil/Diplomatic Service European Fast Stream scheme, which is intended to prepare candidates to take the EU staff entry competition successfully, appears so far to have generated no additional permanent generalist EU officials for the UK since it was re-launched in 2010.
  - As regards the numbers of UK candidates in the EU staff entry competition, we welcome signs that more UK nationals are becoming interested in embarking on this career path. However, given the pass rate, the numbers of UK entrants to the competition remain too low (at 2.4% of the total in 2012, for example) to generate an up-and-coming UK presence in the EU institutions large enough to compensate for the numbers of UK officials who are retiring, having gone to work for the EU institutions when the UK joined the then-European Economic Community forty years ago. This applies particularly to the European Commission. The Government must therefore

reckon with a declining UK presence among Commission staff in coming years, especially at the most senior levels. Even if UK representation at entry levels in the Commission were to pick up significantly now, it would be too late to fill what the Foreign Secretary has correctly identified as a ‘generation gap’ in the UK presence. (Paragraph 19)

### **Seconded national experts (SNEs)**

4. We welcome the creation of an EU Staffing Unit in the FCO with a remit to increase secondments of UK civil servants into the EU institutions. We recommend that, as it develops its plans for Civil Service reform, the Government should ensure that undertaking secondments into the EU institutions will be encouraged and recognised. We recommend that in its response to this Report the FCO should set out in detail how its new EU Staffing Unit will work with other Departments, and Ministers and officials responsible for Civil Service reform in the Cabinet Office, to deliver more secondments from among UK civil servants into the EU institutions. (Paragraph 23)

### **European External Action Service (EEAS)**

5. In the new European External Action Service (EEAS), one-third of policy jobs must go to national diplomats seconded from the Member States. This appears to be enabling a slightly larger UK presence in the new Service than in other EU institutions. However, the number of such jobs remains limited, and UK candidates face tough competition to secure them. We endorse the FCO’s strategy of seeking to target EEAS jobs of particular potential importance for the UK, although it must do so without risking UK candidates being seen as representatives purely of UK interests. (Paragraph 32)
6. We endorse the view taken by our predecessor Committee when it first examined the European External Action Service (EEAS), namely that it will be to the benefit of the FCO and the UK if high-quality UK diplomats and other civil servants undertake secondments into the EEAS and then return to UK service. While we recognise that FCO and Civil Service financial and staff resources are strained, it must be to the UK’s benefit to have UK officials in key EEAS positions and to gather first-hand experience of the new Service to feed back into Whitehall. As UK diplomats move through their periods of secondment to the EEAS, we recommend that the FCO should focus on maximising the prospect that they will return to UK service. (Paragraph 33)

### **EU membership uncertainty**

7. We recommend that the FCO should report annually to Parliament, either in its departmental annual report or separately, on the numbers of UK nationals working for the main EU institutions (as permanent staff, temporary agents, seconded national experts, and seconded national diplomats in the European External Action Service), and on the representation and performance of UK nationals in the EU staff entrance competition (the *concours*). This is warranted by the importance of the



issue for UK influence in the EU, the resources that the FCO is devoting to increasing the numbers of UK personnel working for the EU, and the difficulty otherwise of compiling relevant published data from multiple sources. Such an annual publication could also act as an indicator if the Prime Minister's commitment that a Conservative Government after 2015 would hold an 'in/out' referendum on the UK's continued EU membership were to weaken the willingness of UK nationals to pursue EU careers. (Paragraph 35)

# 1 Introduction

---

1. The Foreign Secretary, the Rt Hon William Hague MP, said in his first major speech in office, in July 2010, that the Government aimed to increase the number of UK nationals working in the EU institutions. Mr Hague said that the previous Government had “presided over a decline in the holding of key European positions by British personnel” and that the Coalition Government was “determined to put this right”.<sup>1</sup>

2. We have consistently taken an interest in the UK staff presence in the EU institutions. We have done so principally through our annual inquiry into the performance and finances of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), when we question the FCO’s Permanent Under-Secretary and other senior officials on FCO human resources policies, among other issue, on the basis of the FCO’s annual report and other communications from the department.<sup>2</sup> The issue of UK nationals’ ability to secure jobs in the EU institutions also arose during our 2010-11 inquiry into *The Role of the FCO in UK Government*, when some witnesses said that the FCO’s wish to see more UK personnel working for the EU meant that it should do more within Government to protect and advocate the teaching and learning of EU languages in UK universities.<sup>3</sup> We also gathered information about the presence of UK personnel in the EU’s new European External Action Service (EEAS) when we held a one-off evidence session in November 2011 with Baroness Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission.<sup>4</sup>

3. In March 2012, we launched an inquiry into Government policy on the future of the EU, primarily to investigate the political and institutional implications for the UK of the December 2011 European Council (when the Prime Minister vetoed EU Treaty change and other Member States concluded a new treaty outside the EU framework, without the UK, to tackle Eurozone issues). UK influence in the EU emerged as a key underlying theme of our inquiry—its extent, the impact on it of Government policy, and how it might best be maintained and strengthened. In that context, a number of witnesses discussed UK nationals on the staff of the EU institutions as a source of UK influence; and we gathered a significant body of data on the issue, principally from the FCO. We were sufficiently struck by what we found to decide to publish the information we had gathered and our conclusions as this short separate Report, in order to give the issue greater accessibility and prominence.<sup>5</sup>

---

1 William Hague, “Britain’s foreign policy in a networked world”, London, 1 July 2010

2 Foreign Affairs Committee, Third Report of Session 2010–12, *FCO Performance and Finances*, HC 572; Eleventh Report of Session 2010–12, *Departmental Annual Report 2010–11*, HC 1618; Fifth Report of Session 2012–13, *FCO Performance and Finances 2011–12*, HC 690

3 See para 12 of this Report; Foreign Affairs Committee, Seventh Report of Session 2010–12, *The Role of the FCO in UK Government*, HC 665, para 163 and Ev w39 [Professor Ritchie Robertson, Professor Sarah Colvin and Dr Peter Thompson] and w45 [Society for Italian Studies]

4 Foreign Affairs Committee, *EU Enlargement and Foreign Policy*, Oral and written evidence, 21 November 2011, HC 1642-i, 12 January 2012

5 We published the main Report arising from our inquiry into *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy* under that title as our First Report of Session 2013-14, HC 87-I and 87-II, 11 June 2013. Most of the evidence for this present Report was published with the evidence for that Report, in Volume II, HC 87-II.

## 2 The UK staff presence in the EU institutions

---

### Nationals in the EU institutions as a source of Member State influence

4. Officially, staff of the EU institutions are required to act only in the interests of the Union. However, such staff are widely acknowledged to be important informal channels of Member State influence within the EU. For example, the former UK diplomat Sir Colin Budd told us that “all EU Member States rely significantly on the nationals they have in the EU institutions as part of their collective networking strength”.<sup>6</sup> The Government has consistently cast the presence of UK nationals on the staff of the EU institutions in these terms.<sup>7</sup> In his July 2010 speech, Mr Hague said that what he identified as the previous Government’s neglect regarding the numbers of UK officials entering the EU institutions was part of what he termed a “mystifying” failure to “give due weight to the development of British influence in the EU”.<sup>8</sup>

5. In terms of their employment status, staff of the EU institutions may be:

- permanent, career EU officials; or
- temporary agents or contract staff, who have only fixed-term contracts with the EU or other non-permanent status; or
- seconded national experts (SNEs), who are Member State public servants whose salaries continue to be paid by their home institutions during their period of secondment (although the EU pays an additional allowance for living abroad). SNEs can expect to return to their domestic careers after their secondment, which may last between six months and four years.<sup>9</sup>

Member State diplomats who join the staff of the new European External Action Service (EEAS) (‘seconded national diplomats’) constitute a fourth, hybrid category: the EEAS employs them as temporary agents, but they must be Member State diplomats and they may work for the EEAS for a maximum of eight years.<sup>10</sup> Hence, like SNEs, they may be expected to return to their national careers after working for the EU (see paragraphs 24-33).

---

6 Foreign Affairs Committee, First Report of Session 2013-14, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, HC 87-II, Ev 62

7 See, for example, “Discover EU Careers - A message from the Foreign Secretary, William Hague”, FCO press release, 1 March 2012.

8 William Hague, “Britain’s foreign policy in a networked world”, London, 1 July 2010

9 Public servants from the non-EU European Economic Area (EEA) countries—namely, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway—may also become SNEs in the EU institutions. Information on types of employment with the EU was taken from the European Commission, at [http://ec.europa.eu/civil\\_service/job/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/civil_service/job/index_en.htm).

10 Extendable to ten in exceptional circumstances; Council Decision 2010/427/EU of 26 July 2010 establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service, Article 6 para 11, OJ L 201, 3 August 2010

6. Permanent EU officials are divided between assistants (AST grades) and administrators (AD grades). The latter are graduate positions roughly equivalent to policy grades in the UK Civil and Diplomatic Services. Entry to the cadre of permanent EU officials is via a two-stage open competitive exam, the *concours*. Different *concours* are run for generalist administrators and for more specialised roles (auditors, lawyers, economists, linguists, and so forth). A large share of the *concours* must be taken in a candidate's second EU language, which must be English, French or German. For any one competition, it can take around nine months from its announcement to notification of results. Successful candidates are placed on a reserve list from which the EU institutions recruit. For generalist administrators, reserve lists remain valid for one year.<sup>11</sup>

### UK nationals on the staff of the EU institutions: situation in 2013

7. The FCO typically presents data on the UK staff presence in the EU institutions in relation to the UK's share of the EU's population. In 2013, the UK share of the EU population is 12.5% (the third-largest after Germany and, marginally, France).<sup>12</sup> The FCO has said that the Government wants a UK staff presence in all the EU institutions in line with the UK's EU population share.<sup>13</sup>

8. Sir Colin Budd told us that there was a falling-off in UK representation among EU staff that he called "alarming":<sup>14</sup>

- In the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU, the UK's share of administrator-grade staff fell from 4.8% in 2010 to 4.3% in June 2013. The equivalent figures for France were 7.7% in 2010 and 6.9% in 2013.<sup>15</sup>
- In the increasingly-powerful European Parliament, the UK share of administrator-grade staff fell from 6.2% in May 2010 to 5.8% at the start of 2013. The equivalent figures for France were 7.5% in 2010 and 8.6% in 2013.<sup>16</sup> The picture was particularly stark among the four grades of contract staff, where the UK had just 17 staff (2.1%) at the start of 2013 compared to France's 140 (17.4%) (the fourth grade of such staff is roughly equivalent to a junior administrator grade).<sup>17</sup>

---

11 See the website of the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO), [www.europa.eu/epso/apply/how\\_apply/permanent/index\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu/epso/apply/how_apply/permanent/index_en.htm), and the Government's brochure on the UK's European Fast Stream scheme, March 2012, [www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-apply-for-a-career-in-the-eu](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-apply-for-a-career-in-the-eu).

12 Council Decision 2013/37/EU of 14 January 2013 amending the Council's Rules of Procedure, OJ L 016, 19 January 2013

13 FCO, *Government Response to the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee Report of Session 2010-12 HC 1618 on the Departmental Annual Report 2010-11*, Cm 8360, June 2012, pp 8-9

14 Foreign Affairs Committee, First Report of Session 2013-14, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, HC 87-II, Ev 62

15 For 2010: in the European Parliament, reply of 18 October 2010 from the Council to a question for written answer from Martin Ehrenhauser MEP, 13 July 2010, E-5456/2010; for 2013: Ev 2 [General Secretariat of the Council of the EU]

16 For 2010: calculated from the data in a letter from Klaus Welle, Secretary-General of the European Parliament, to the Council, 25 May 2010, available as Council document 10729/10, "Breakdown by nationality and grade of staff in post at the European Parliament", 4 June 2010; for 2013: Ev 1 [European Parliament]

17 Ev 1 [European Parliament]

The campaign organisation Business for New Europe expressed particular concern about declining numbers of UK nationals on the staff of the European Commission.<sup>18</sup> Table 1 presents figures which the FCO provided to us for the numbers of UK nationals on the staff of the European Commission since 2005:

**Table 1: UK nationals on the staff of the European Commission, 2005-2012  
(permanent officials and temporary agents)**

<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
1449	1452	1417	1362	1340	1296	1175	1094
<i>Change</i>	+3	-35	-55	-22	-44	-121	-81

Source: FCO, in Foreign Affairs Committee, *First Report of Session 2013-14, The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, HC 87-II, Ev 90

According to these figures, the number of UK nationals on the staff of the European Commission fell by 24% in the seven years to 2012, and by 16% in the two years to 2012. The UK presence in the Commission had shrunk by a further 15 officials by the start of April 2013 (although it went back up by one by June).<sup>19</sup>

9. The FCO said that UK staff numbers in the European Commission were declining because more UK personnel were retiring than entering.<sup>20</sup> Business for New Europe similarly highlighted the fact that the intake of UK officials who entered the Commission when the UK joined the then-European Economic Community in 1973 was reaching retirement age.<sup>21</sup> For June 2013, Table 2 presents the numbers of UK nationals at different levels of the European Commission. For comparison, it includes the equivalent figures for French nationals, since France and the UK have almost the same share of EU population:

18 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 177

19 1 April 2013 and 1 June 2013 versions of the regularly-updated European Commission data at [www.ec.europa.eu/civil\\_service/about/figures/index\\_en.htm](http://www.ec.europa.eu/civil_service/about/figures/index_en.htm) Commission data

20 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 90

21 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 177

**Table 2: UK and French nationals on the staff of the European Commission, June 2013  
(permanent officials and temporary agents)**

	<b>France</b>	<b>UK</b>
% of EU population	13.0	12.5
<b>European Commission staff (permanent officials and temporary agents, 1 June 2013)</b>		
% of Director-level administrator grades (AD 14-16)	13.3	7.8
% of mid-level administrator grades (AD 8-13)	11.7	7.0
% of entry-level administrator grades (AD 5-7)	6.8	2.2
% of all administrator grades (AD 5-16)	10.2	5.4
% of total staff (assistant and administrator grades)	9.7	4.6

Sources: EU population shares: Council Decision 2013/37/EU of 14 January 2013 amending the Council's Rules of Procedure, OJ L 016, 19 January 2013; European Commission staff data: calculated from the 1 June 2013 version of the regularly-updated European Commission data at [www.ec.europa.eu/civil\\_service/about/figures/index\\_en.htm](http://www.ec.europa.eu/civil_service/about/figures/index_en.htm)

Table 2 shows that the UK is more strongly represented at more senior grades than junior ones. However, in April 2013, the FCO told us that as a result of retirements, the number of UK nationals at Director level (AD grades 14-16) in the European Commission had fallen from 94 in 2007 to 56.<sup>22</sup> By June 2013, the figure was down to 53, representing 7.8% of all Commission staff at this level.<sup>23</sup>

10. Table 2 confirms the tiny size of the UK presence at entry-level administrator grades (AD 5-7) in the European Commission. At these grades, in June 2013 there were 14 Member States with more nationals than the UK—not only France and Germany but also Belgium, Italy and Spain among pre-2004 Member States, and Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia among post-2004 Members.<sup>24</sup> As a result of the relative lack of new UK entrants to the European Commission, Mr Hague said in 2010 that the UK was facing a “generation gap” in its presence “in parts of the EU where early decisions and early drafting take place”.<sup>25</sup>

22 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 90

23 1 June 2013 version of the regularly-updated European Commission data at [www.ec.europa.eu/civil\\_service/about/figures/index\\_en.htm](http://www.ec.europa.eu/civil_service/about/figures/index_en.htm)

24 1 June 2013 version of the regularly-updated European Commission data at [www.ec.europa.eu/civil\\_service/about/figures/index\\_en.htm](http://www.ec.europa.eu/civil_service/about/figures/index_en.htm)

25 William Hague, “Britain’s foreign policy in a networked world”, 1 July 2010

11. In relation to its share of the EU's population, the UK is significantly under-represented among the staff of the major EU institutions (Council, Commission and Parliament). We were seriously concerned to learn that the number of UK nationals on the staff of the European Commission has fallen by 24% in seven years. The UK now fields 4.6% of Commission staff, compared to its 12.5% share of the EU's population; France's shares are 13.0% of the EU population and 9.7% of Commission staff. In the increasingly-powerful European Parliament, the UK's share of administrator-grade staff has fallen from 6.2% to 5.8% since 2010 (while France's has risen from 7.5% to 8.6%); and in the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU the UK's share of administrator-grade staff fell from 4.8% to 4.3% over the same period (while France's fell from 7.7% to 6.9%).

## Government action

### *Concours*

12. Business for New Europe said that the language requirements of the *concours* were a barrier to UK entrants. We have highlighted the UK's ability to place staff in the EU institutions as one of the diplomatic objectives affected by the level of language skills in the FCO.<sup>26</sup> As an indication of the scale of the challenge, in 2010 6% of upper secondary students in the UK were learning two or more languages, compared to an EU average of 60%. An average of 40% of students at this level across the EU were learning one foreign language, against 37% in the UK. Among upper secondary students in the UK, 27% were learning French and 10% German, while in the EU as a whole 93% of such students were learning English.<sup>27</sup> In 2011, the Government sought the European Commission's agreement to the holding of at least one English-only *concours*, but the request was turned down, on the grounds that the principle of multilingualism could not be relaxed.<sup>28</sup>

13. Business for New Europe also said that awareness of EU career opportunities at UK universities was low.<sup>29</sup> In 2010 the FCO commissioned a survey of 2,200 UK undergraduates in which 51% of respondents said that they wanted to work for an international organisation but 81% that they had not heard of the EU recruitment process. Among respondents who had not applied or never considered working for the EU, lack of knowledge about the recruitment process was given as the explanation more often than any other factor.<sup>30</sup>

---

26 Foreign Affairs Committee, Fifth Report of Session 2012–13, *FCO Performance and Finances 2011–12*, HC 690, para 60

27 Eurostat data (data code educ\_ilang) for ISCED level 3 (GEN) students, via [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search\\_database](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database), and Eurostat page "Foreign language learning statistics", at [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics\\_explained/index.php/Foreign\\_language\\_learning\\_statistics](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Foreign_language_learning_statistics). Government figures published on 24 June 2013 showed that between 2001/02 and 2011/12 the number of GCSE entries in the UK in French fell by 55% and in German by 56%; HL Deb, 24 June 2013, cols 90-92WA.

28 "Brussels seeks to woo monoglot Brits", [www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com), 20 February 2011; "Commission rejects 'English-only' exam to lift UK numbers", [www.euobserver.com](http://www.euobserver.com), 21 February 2011

29 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 177

30 "Students unaware of EU career opportunities", FCO press release, 21 January 2011. The FCO supplied us with the survey results, which we published with the FCO's permission at Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 94.

14. The Government is taking a number of steps to try to increase the number and success rate of UK entrants to the *concours*:<sup>31</sup>

- From 2009 to 2012 the FCO funded a secondee into the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO), the EU body that administers the *concours*, to improve mutual understanding of the challenges for the UK's would-be EU officials. Having returned to the UK, the former secondee is managing the team in the FCO which deals with EU staffing. The FCO and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) are now co-funding a second secondee into EPSO.<sup>32</sup>
- In Brussels, the UK Permanent Representation to the EU, UKREP, provides training to UK candidates for the *concours*.<sup>33</sup> The FCO told us that all the successful UK candidates in the 2012 *concours* had received UKREP training.<sup>34</sup> UKREP has also been supportive of the British Brussels Network, which was founded in 2011 and is managed by Business for New Europe (one of our witnesses). The organisation aims to provide networking opportunities for Britons working on EU affairs in Brussels and facilitate contact for them with EU and UK officials.<sup>35</sup>
- In the UK, the FCO has engaged in a significant awareness-raising effort. It now holds an EU Careers Month each March; it has engaged in advertising and social media campaigns; ministers and officials participate in EU careers events at universities around the UK; and the FCO has hosted events for university language teachers and careers staff.<sup>36</sup> The FCO also launched a dedicated section on its previous website, although this appears to be less accessible since the FCO website was migrated onto the shared [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) site at the end of 2012.<sup>37</sup>
- The Government has continued to operate the European Fast Stream scheme. This is a two-year programme for Civil or Diplomatic Service Fast Stream entrants who already have 'A' level French or German and wish to pursue a career in the EU institutions. The programme provides tailored placements and language and other training intended to prepare participants to take the *concours* successfully. The previous Government suspended the programme in 2007—on the grounds that for several years the EU institutions were recruiting only nationals from the new EU

---

31 For a recent statement, see Baroness Warsi, FCO Senior Minister of State, at HL Deb, 8 Jan 2013, col 29WA.

32 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 89 [FCO]

33 See, for example, "Message to all British candidates invited to the Assessment Centre (EPSO/AD/230-21/12)", 7 August 2012, message from UKREP posted to the EPSO blog for the 2012 administrator competition, via <http://blogs.ec.europa.eu/eu-careers.info>.

34 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 88-89

35 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 177 [Business for New Europe]

36 See, for example, the FCO press releases "Minister for Europe: There's more to Brussels than bureaucrats", 29 September 2010, "Careers in the EU: opportunities for UK graduates", 19 October 2010, "Foreign Office launches EU Careers Month", 7 February 2011, and "Fulfil your global potential with a career in the European Civil Service", 16 February 2011 and 19 October 2011; "Brussels seeks to woo monoglot Brits", [www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com), 20 February 2011; and "EU institutions desperately need Brits!", University of Salford Postgraduate Careers Blog, 22 October 2010, <http://pgblog.careers.salford.ac.uk/2010/10/eu-institutions-desperately-need-brits>.

37 In June 2013, 'EU careers' or a similar heading did not appear on the 'Europe' page of the [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) site, or on the page of the site dedicated to UKREP.



Member States—and decided to re-start it shortly before the 2010 General Election.<sup>38</sup>

- On behalf of the Government, BIS is continuing to fund postgraduate study at the College of Europe for Fast Streamers or European Fast Streamers who intend to make EU careers and who gain a place at the College. BIS funded four students in 2011/12 and 2012/13 and plans to maintain this for 2013/14. The FCO is also planning to fund a further student itself.<sup>39</sup> Dr Simon Usherwood of the University of Surrey, who studied at the College in the late 1990s, told us that spending time there was a “door-opener” and a “very valuable means of securing employment in Brussels”. However, he criticised a reduction in UK Government funding for study at the College.<sup>40</sup> The UK Government used to fund around two dozen students there; but shortly before the 2010 General Election the then Government announced plans first to halt the funding entirely, and then to restore it for a more limited number of places for Civil and Diplomatic Service Fast Streamers only.<sup>41</sup>

15. The FCO provided us with figures which show that the number of UK entrants to the *concours* has been rising. In 2012, the European Commission entered *The Times* ‘Top 100 Graduate Employers’ rankings for the first time since 2004, at 56 (up from 86 eight years earlier), which also suggests an increase in awareness among university students.<sup>42</sup> However, the numbers of UK entrants remain low: the Minister for Europe, the Rt Hon David Lidington MP, has said that the UK fielded fewer candidates than any other Member State in both 2010 and 2011, at around 1.5% of the total in 2010 and 2.6% in 2011.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, a larger number of UK entrants is not so far being converted into a larger number of UK nationals passing. Table 3 shows the performance of UK nationals in the *concours* since 2010:

---

38 HC Deb, 6 May 2009, col 170W; HL Deb, 4 Feb 2010, col 65WA; HL Deb, 9 Feb 2010, cols 110-111WA; HC Deb, 15 June 2010, cols 355W, 416W; HC Deb, 11 May 2011, col 1180; “More civil servants sought for Brussels”, [www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com), 14 February 2010

39 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 89 [FCO]

40 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 184-185

41 HL Deb, 6 April 2010, cols 1423-1430; HC Deb, 12 July 2010, col 508W; “Change restores funding to train Eurocrats”, [www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com), 4 March 2010

42 [www.top100graduateemployers.com/home](http://www.top100graduateemployers.com/home). The rankings are based on responses to an open question about the best employer for graduates, given in face-to-face interviews conducted in the summer of the year concerned, with almost 18,000 final-year students. In 2012, the Civil Service was at 7 in the rankings and the FCO at 74.

43 FCO press releases “Working for the EU”, 5 July 2010, “Foreign Office launches EU Careers Month”, 7 February 2011, and “Fulfil your global potential with a career in the European Civil Service”, 19 October 2011; and Mr Lidington’s blog, “More British nationals in the EU civil service can transform our influence”, 20 March 2012

**Table 3: Performance of UK nationals in the EU *concours*, 2010-2012  
(European public administration [generalist administrator], audit, communications, economist,  
external relations and law streams)**

	2010	2011	2012
Total entrants to <i>concours</i>	Not available	Not available	45,357
Of whom UK nationals	747	996	1,066 (2.4%)
Total passing <i>concours</i>	Not available	Not available	233
Of whom UK nationals	7	7	6 (2.6%)
% of total entrants passing	Not available	Not available	0.5
% of UK entrants passing	0.9	0.7	0.6

Sources: For UK nationals: FCO, in Foreign Affairs Committee, *First Report of Session 2013-14, The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, HC 87-II, Ev 88-89; for total EU: figures for the 2012 competitions EPSO/AD/230/12 and EPSO/AD/231/12 posted on the EPSO blog, <http://blogs.ec.europa.eu/eu-careers.info>, 3 May 2012 (entrants) and 15 February 2013 (passing). For 2011 and 2012, the figures are for AD grades 5 and 7 combined. In 2010, there was a competition only for AD grade 5. 'Passing' is defined as securing a place on the reserve list.

Table 3 shows that the pass rate among UK entrants has been tending downwards, although in 2012 it was just above the pass rate for entrants as a whole.<sup>44</sup> The FCO admitted that “work remains to be done to help translate [the increase in UK entrants] into more successful candidates”.<sup>45</sup>

16. The figures in Table 3 for UK entrants to the *concours* include European Fast Streamers. There were 21, 14 and 15 entrants to the European Fast Stream in 2010, 2011 and 2012, respectively.<sup>46</sup> Of the 21 members of the 2010 intake, 15 took the first stage of the generalist administrator *concours* in 2011, of whom three passed; and of those three, one passed the second stage (and then did not take up an EU job). In 2012, 25 European Fast Streamers took the first stage of the *concours* but none passed.<sup>47</sup> As of 2012, therefore, having been re-launched in 2010, the European Fast Stream appeared to have generated no new permanent UK generalist officials in the EU institutions. In light of these results, the FCO told us that the Civil Service was putting in place a more rigorous and targeted training programme for European Fast Streamers in preparation for the first *concours* stage.<sup>48</sup> Unfortunately for the purposes of gauging the impact of the Government's efforts, there is no new *concours* for generalist administrators in 2013.<sup>49</sup>

44 It has been reported that no Danish nationals passed the 2012 *concours* at all, for example; “No Danes pass EU job exam”, [www.euobserver.com](http://www.euobserver.com), 21 February 2013.

45 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 88

46 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 89 [FCO]; HC Deb, 15 June 2010, cols 416W, 355W

47 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 89 [FCO]

48 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 89 [FCO]

49 Following a successful legal challenge to the 2010 results, the 2010 competitions are being re-run with previously excluded candidates allowed to re-enter; see “UK fails tests for Eurocrats”, *Wall Street Journal*, 20 March 2012.

17. Although the numbers of successful *concours* entrants from the UK are small, the FCO told us that they are usually among the first from the reserve lists to secure jobs in the EU institutions. Of the seven UK candidates who passed the *concours* in 2010, the FCO told us that all had secured EU jobs. Of the seven who passed in 2011, the FCO told us that four had secured jobs, two were in the process of doing so, and one had decided to pursue an alternative career path.<sup>50</sup>

**18. The Government is correct to have identified both the importance of UK personnel on the staff of the EU institutions as a channel for UK influence in the EU, and the fact that the UK faces a serious problem with respect to its declining representation among EU staff. We commend the Government for launching an effort to increase the UK staff presence in the EU institutions.**

**19. The Government is taking steps to try to increase both the number and the success rate of UK entrants to the competition to become permanent EU officials:**

- **The entry competition for new permanent EU officials is tough. As regards the success rate, among UK entrants it appears to be roughly the same as for the EU as a whole, although we were concerned to note that it is on a downward trend. We were especially disconcerted to discover that the Civil/Diplomatic Service European Fast Stream scheme, which is intended to prepare candidates to take the EU staff entry competition successfully, appears so far to have generated no additional permanent generalist EU officials for the UK since it was re-launched in 2010.**
- **As regards the numbers of UK candidates in the EU staff entry competition, we welcome signs that more UK nationals are becoming interested in embarking on this career path. However, given the pass rate, the numbers of UK entrants to the competition remain too low (at 2.4% of the total in 2012, for example) to generate an up-and-coming UK presence in the EU institutions large enough to compensate for the numbers of UK officials who are retiring, having gone to work for the EU institutions when the UK joined the then-European Economic Community forty years ago. This applies particularly to the European Commission. The Government must therefore reckon with a declining UK presence among Commission staff in coming years, especially at the most senior levels. Even if UK representation at entry levels in the Commission were to pick up significantly now, it would be too late to fill what the Foreign Secretary has correctly identified as a ‘generation gap’ in the UK presence.**

### **Seconded national experts (SNEs)**

20. Permanent officials are only one category of EU staff: placing Civil Service secondees into the EU institutions as seconded national experts (SNEs) is another route by which Member States may gain a presence. Business for New Europe told us that such secondments were not encouraged in the UK Civil Service, and that this was another factor behind the UK’s relatively small presence in the EU institutions.<sup>51</sup> FCO figures in 2012

---

50 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 90 [FCO]

51 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 177

showed that between 2009 and 2012 the number of UK civil servants seconded into EU institutions and agencies at any time ranged between 79 and 127, with no clear trend evident over the period.<sup>52</sup> In April 2013, the FCO told us that the UK had 60 fewer SNEs in the EU institutions than either France or Germany.<sup>53</sup>

21. In 2010, Mr Lidington said that “work [was] underway to develop a more strategic approach to the use of secondments of UK civil servants to [...] the EU institutions”.<sup>54</sup> In April 2013, the FCO told us that it was due to start operating an EU Staffing Unit in May 2013, with a remit to place 20 additional SNEs into the EU institutions each year for the next three years. The Unit is being funded from cross-Whitehall contributions.<sup>55</sup>

22. The 2012 Civil Service Reform Plan acknowledged that the secondment of the ablest civil servants out of their home departments had sometimes been discouraged, for fear that they would not return. The Plan said in general terms that secondments were now to be encouraged, but it said nothing specifically about the EU (or any other international organisation).<sup>56</sup> Discussion of secondments in the Public Administration Committee’s current inquiry into Civil Service reform has covered interchange between the public and private sectors, not Whitehall and the EU or other international organisations.<sup>57</sup>

**23. We welcome the creation of an EU Staffing Unit in the FCO with a remit to increase secondments of UK civil servants into the EU institutions. We recommend that, as it develops its plans for Civil Service reform, the Government should ensure that undertaking secondments into the EU institutions will be encouraged and recognised. We recommend that in its response to this Report the FCO should set out in detail how its new EU Staffing Unit will work with other Departments, and Ministers and officials responsible for Civil Service reform in the Cabinet Office, to deliver more secondments from among UK civil servants into the EU institutions.**

### **European External Action Service (EEAS)**

24. Given our remit as the Foreign Affairs Committee, we attach particular importance to the presence of UK nationals in the European External Action Service (EEAS), the new EU ‘diplomatic service’ which was created by the Lisbon Treaty and came into operation at the start of 2011. In terms of EU personnel practices, the EEAS represents a significant innovation: when it reaches full strength, at least one-third of its staff are to comprise seconded national diplomats, who are to be employed by the EEAS as temporary agents for a maximum of eight years.<sup>58</sup> The rest of the EEAS’s original staff were made up of the staff

---

52 HC Deb, 16 July 2012, cols 562-564

53 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 92

54 HC Deb, 16 September 2010, col 1185

55 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 92

56 HM Government, *The Civil Service Reform Plan*, June 2012, p 24

57 Public Administration Select Committee, *Future of the Civil Service*, Written Evidence, accessible in June 2013 via the Committee’s web page at [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmpublicadm/writev/csr/csr.pdf](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmpublicadm/writev/csr/csr.pdf)

58 Extendable to ten in exceptional circumstances; Council Decision 2010/427/EU of 26 July 2010 establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service, Article 6, paras 9, 11, OJ L 201, 3 August 2010. For the purposes of the EEAS, UK ‘national diplomats’ might include civil servants (such as DFID officials, for example) in addition to members of the Diplomatic Service. The Council Decision on the EEAS does not specify a deadline by which the one-third target for the share of positions taken by seconded national diplomats is to be met.

of the parts of the European Commission and Council General Secretariat which were transferred to create the EEAS when the new Service was established. From 1 July 2013, EEAS jobs will also be open to staff of other EU institutions, such as the European Parliament.<sup>59</sup> The EU legislation establishing the EEAS provides that recruitment to the Service “shall be based on merit whilst ensuring adequate geographical and gender balance”, and that the Service shall include a “meaningful presence of nationals from all the Member States”.<sup>60</sup>

25. When it examined the emerging EEAS in the last Parliament, our predecessor Committee expressed the view that it would be beneficial for the FCO and the UK if high-quality UK respect to the UK-based staff who would be eligible for secondment into the EEAS, as diplomats undertook secondments into the EEAS and then returned to UK service.<sup>61</sup> This was despite the fact that FCO staff numbers are under considerable strain (especially with opposed to locally-engaged staff).<sup>62</sup> In 2012, the FCO acknowledged that “seconding FCO staff to the EEAS will continue to have implications for FCO staff resources”. However, it said that the process was an “investment [which was] worthwhile in terms of both FCO corporate expertise and [its] policy interest in the EEAS being better able to deliver on UK security and prosperity”.<sup>63</sup>

26. Table 4 shows the development of the UK presence in the EEAS between November 2011 and December 2012:

---

At administrator (AD) grades, at least 60% of staff must be permanent EU officials *i.e.* the share of positions at these grades taken by seconded national diplomats is, effectively, capped at 40%.

- 59 Council Decision 2010/427/EU of 26 July 2010 establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service, Preamble para 11, OJ L 201, 3 August 2010
- 60 Council Decision 2010/427/EU of 26 July 2010 establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service, Article 6 para 6, OJ L 201, 3 August 2010. For recent comparative data and discussion of the complexities of “ensuring adequate geographical and gender balance” in the EEAS, see the evidence from Dr Simon Duke, European Institute of Public Administration, in House of Lords EU Committee, Eleventh Report of Session 2012-13, *The EU’s External Action Service*, HL Paper 147, Evidence Volume, pp 149-159; and European Parliament, Directorate-General for External Policies, *Achieving Geographical and Gender Balance in the European External Action Service*, study for the European Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee, document PE 457.106, January 2013.
- 61 Foreign Affairs Committee, Third Report of Session 2007-08, *Foreign Policy Aspects of the Lisbon Treaty*, HC 120, para 194; Fifth Report of Session 2009-10, *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Report 2008-09*, HC 145, paras 231-241
- 62 Foreign Affairs Committee, Third Report of Session 2010-12, *FCO Performance and Finances*, HC 572, paras 37-47; Fifth Report of Session 2012-13, *FCO Performance and Finances 2011-12*, HC 690, paras 35-49
- 63 FCO, *Government Response to the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee Report of Session 2010-12 HC 1618 on the Departmental Annual Report 2010-11*, Cm 8360, June 2012, p 9

Table 4: UK staff of the European External Action Service (EEAS), 2011-2012

	November 2011	December 2012
Total EEAS staff	Not available	c. 3,300
Of whom UK nationals	126	150 (c. 4.5%)
EEAS administrator-grade (AD) staff	Not available	901
Of whom UK nationals	Not available	69 (7.7%)
Seconded national diplomats among EEAS administrator-grade (AD) staff	Not available	249 (27.6% of all AD staff)
Of whom UK nationals	10	20 (8%)

Sources: For November 2011: written evidence provided by David O'Sullivan, Chief Operating Officer, EEAS, in connection with a one-off evidence session with Baroness Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, published as *Foreign Affairs Committee, EU Enlargement and Foreign Policy, Oral and written evidence, 21 November 2011, HC 1642-i, 12 January 2012*; for December 2012, House of Lords EU Committee, *Eleventh Report of Session 2012-13, The EU's External Action Service, HL Paper 147, para 147*

The table shows that, in December 2012:

- seconded national diplomats accounted for 27.6% of all administrator-grade staff in the EEAS but 29.0% of UK administrator-grade staff (20 of 69 people); and
- UK nationals represented 8% of seconded national diplomats in the EEAS, compared to 7.7% of all administrator-grade staff, and around 4.5% of all EEAS staff.

The FCO had anticipated that the UK would be under-represented in those parts of the EEAS staff that were transferred from the Commission and Council Secretariat, as a result of the UK's under-representation in those institutions.<sup>64</sup> However, the data in Table 4 suggest that the secondment of national diplomats into the EEAS is offering the UK an opportunity to make up its position somewhat. The 7.7% figure for the UK share of administrator-grade staff in the EEAS is higher than the figures for the UK shares of administrator-grade staff in the European Commission, European Parliament or Council General Secretariat (see paragraphs 8-9), although still below the UK's share of the EU's population.

27. The FCO told us that between December 2012 and April 2013 a further two UK national diplomats secured EEAS positions. The April 2013 figure of 22 UK seconded national diplomats in the EEAS comprised 18 officials from the FCO and one each from the Department for International Development (DFID), Ministry of Defence (MOD),

64 FCO, *Government Response to the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee Report of Session 2010-12 HC 1618 on the Departmental Annual Report 2010-11*, Cm 8360, June 2012, p 8

Department of Transport and Police Service of Northern Ireland.<sup>65</sup> The UK also had 24 seconded national experts (SNEs) in the EEAS, comprising seven from the FCO, three from DFID and 14 from the MOD.<sup>66</sup>

28. At the most senior levels in the EEAS, at the turn of 2012-13:

- Eleven (8%) of the 141 Heads of Delegation or overseas offices were UK nationals.<sup>67</sup> Of these, eight were permanent EU officials and three seconded national diplomats from the FCO.<sup>68</sup> In June 2013, the posting of one British permanent EU official as Head of the EU Delegation in Nigeria came to an end, but the appointment was announced of a further seconded UK diplomat as EU Head of Delegation in Serbia, so the overall tally of eleven UK Heads of Delegation remained unchanged.<sup>69</sup>
- Two of the eleven EU Special Representatives (EUSRs) were UK nationals: the EUSR to the African Union and the EUSR to Sudan.<sup>70</sup>

29. In his evidence to the recent inquiry into the EEAS by the House of Lords EU Committee, the FCO's Head of Europe Directorate, Hugo Shorter, indicated that the FCO was ranking forthcoming EEAS jobs according to their importance for the UK, and actively inviting suitable FCO candidates to apply for the priority positions.<sup>71</sup> Some of the independent witnesses to the inquiry expressed doubts about the FCO's commitment to UK engagement with the EEAS,<sup>72</sup> but others said that the Foreign Secretary was personally engaged and "wants to see Britain have influence within the EEAS".<sup>73</sup> However, Mr Shorter said that the number of EEAS jobs available for national diplomats was limited, given the large majority of positions earmarked for permanent EU officials; and that smaller Member States often put up extremely senior national diplomats for EEAS jobs, whereas the FCO might enter somewhat less senior competitors. Overall, Mr Shorter said that the UK faced "very tough" competition to get its diplomats into EEAS positions.<sup>74</sup> The FCO told us that in 2012 UK candidates for EEAS jobs were achieving a success rate of 7%.<sup>75</sup>

---

65 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 91 [FCO]

66 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 91 [FCO]

67 House of Lords EU Committee, Eleventh Report of Session 2012-13, *The EU's External Action Service*, HL Paper 147, para 147

68 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 91 [FCO]. The eight British permanent EU officials were Heads of Delegation to Egypt, Fiji, Indonesia, Israel, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Thailand and the African Union (of whom the last was 'double-hatted' as one of the two British EUSRs). The three seconded FCO diplomats were Heads of Delegation to Bolivia, Morocco and Switzerland. We were pleased to have contact with the British Head of the EU Delegation to Switzerland, Richard Jones, when we visited Berne in October 2012 as part of our inquiry into Government policy on the future of the EU.

69 "High Representative Catherine Ashton appoints new Heads of EU Delegations to Peru and Serbia", EU Council press release, 7 June 2013; "EU names new envoys in Africa", [www.europeanvoice.com](http://www.europeanvoice.com), 14 June 2013

70 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 91 [FCO]

71 House of Lords EU Committee, Eleventh Report of Session 2012-13, *The EU's External Action Service*, HL Paper 147, Evidence Volume, Q 14

72 House of Lords EU Committee, *The EU's External Action Service*, Evidence Volume, Qq 38-39 [Professor Whitman]

73 House of Lords EU Committee, *The EU's External Action Service*, Evidence Volume, Q 39 [Edward Burke]

74 House of Lords EU Committee, *The EU's External Action Service*, Evidence Volume, Q 7

75 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 91

30. The FCO told us that it was “working [...] to promote the EEAS as a stepping stone in the career of talented UK officials”.<sup>76</sup> It said that jobs in EEAS Delegations overseas would often provide a similar range of opportunities for personal and professional development as positions in UK Embassies, but perhaps with additional budgetary and personnel management responsibilities, and sometimes with greater opportunities to use more languages. The FCO said that successful secondments to the EEAS were likely to be “an asset” for applicants to FCO positions dealing with the EU.<sup>77</sup> More recently, in its May 2013 response to the report on the EEAS produced by the House of Lords EU Committee, the FCO said that:

The careers of British diplomats seconded to the EEAS are not adversely affected on return to the UK. British diplomats are encouraged to undertake secondments throughout their careers, including to the EEAS. When such staff return to the FCO from secondment, the new skills and experience they have developed are welcomed and valued as part of their career development.<sup>78</sup>

31. The EU legislation establishing the EEAS obliges Member States to guarantee that they will reinstate their national diplomats at the end of their EEAS employment.<sup>79</sup> Officials leaving the EEAS will return to their home Department on its terms and conditions. The FCO told us that its diplomats were finding that their terms and conditions in the EEAS “compare[d] favourably” to those in the FCO.<sup>80</sup>

**32. In the new European External Action Service (EEAS), one-third of policy jobs must go to national diplomats seconded from the Member States. This appears to be enabling a slightly larger UK presence in the new Service than in other EU institutions. However, the number of such jobs remains limited, and UK candidates face tough competition to secure them. We endorse the FCO’s strategy of seeking to target EEAS jobs of particular potential importance for the UK, although it must do so without risking UK candidates being seen as representatives purely of UK interests.**

**33. We endorse the view taken by our predecessor Committee when it first examined the European External Action Service (EEAS), namely that it will be to the benefit of the FCO and the UK if high-quality UK diplomats and other civil servants undertake secondments into the EEAS and then return to UK service. While we recognise that FCO and Civil Service financial and staff resources are strained, it must be to the UK’s benefit to have UK officials in key EEAS positions and to gather first-hand experience of the new Service to feed back into Whitehall. As UK diplomats move through their**

---

76 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 81-82

77 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 92

78 FCO, *Government Response to House of Lords EU Committee Report: The EU’s External Action Service*, 20 May 2013, para 33, [www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/eu-sub-com-c/EEAS/Government-response-to-HoL-inquiry-on-the-EEAS090513.pdf](http://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/eu-sub-com-c/EEAS/Government-response-to-HoL-inquiry-on-the-EEAS090513.pdf)

79 Council Decision 2010/427/EU of 26 July 2010 establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service, Article 6, para 11, OJ L 201, 3 August 2010

80 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, Ev 91. See the EEAS salary and allowances figures published as Appendix 5 in House of Lords EU Committee, Eleventh Report of Session 2012-13, *The EU’s External Action Service*, HL Paper 147, and the comparative information provided by the FCO at pp 364-367 in the Evidence Volume for that report.



periods of secondment to the EEAS, we recommend that the FCO should focus on maximising the prospect that they will return to UK service.

### EU membership uncertainty?

34. In his major EU policy speech of 23 January 2013, the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon David Cameron MP, announced that, if there is a Conservative Government after the 2015 General Election, it will hold a referendum by the end of 2017 on the UK's continued membership of the EU.<sup>81</sup> When the Foreign Secretary gave evidence to us for our inquiry into Government policy on the future of the EU in February 2013, we raised with him the possibility that uncertainty over the UK's continued membership arising from the Prime Minister's speech might undermine the Government's efforts to increase the numbers of UK personnel going to work for the EU institutions. Both Mr Hague and Sir Jon Cunliffe, the UK's Permanent Representative to the EU, said that at that stage they had seen no sign of such an effect.<sup>82</sup>

35. **We recommend that the FCO should report annually to Parliament, either in its departmental annual report or separately, on the numbers of UK nationals working for the main EU institutions (as permanent staff, temporary agents, seconded national experts, and seconded national diplomats in the European External Action Service), and on the representation and performance of UK nationals in the EU staff entrance competition (the *concours*). This is warranted by the importance of the issue for UK influence in the EU, the resources that the FCO is devoting to increasing the numbers of UK personnel working for the EU, and the difficulty otherwise of compiling relevant published data from multiple sources. Such an annual publication could also act as an indicator if the Prime Minister's commitment that a Conservative Government after 2015 would hold an 'in/out' referendum on the UK's continued EU membership were to weaken the willingness of UK nationals to pursue EU careers.**

---

81 David Cameron, EU speech at Bloomberg HQ, London, 23 January 2013, [www.gov.uk/government/speeches/eu-speech-at-bloomberg](http://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/eu-speech-at-bloomberg); see Foreign Affairs Committee, First Report of Session 2013-14, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, HC 87-I, paras 144-153.

82 Foreign Affairs Committee, *The future of the European Union: UK Government policy*, HC 87-II, Qq 180-181

# Formal Minutes

---

**Tuesday 25 June 2013**

Members present:

Richard Ottaway, in the Chair

Sir Menzies Campbell  
Mike Gapes  
Mark Hendrick  
Mr Andrew Rosindell

Mr Frank Roy  
Rory Stewart  
Sir John Stanley

Draft Report (*The UK staff presence in the EU institutions*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

*Ordered*, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 7 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 8 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 9 and 10 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 11 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 12 to 34 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 35 read, amended and agreed to.

Summary read, amended and agreed to.

*Resolved*, That the Report, as amended, be the Second Report of the Committee to the House.

*Ordered*, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

*Ordered*, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No 134.

Written evidence was ordered to be reported to the House for printing with the Report.

[Adjourned till Tuesday 2 July at 1.45 pm.]

## List of written evidence

---

- |   |  |      |
|---|--|------|
| 1 | Directorate for Resources, European Parliament | Ev 1 |
| 2 | General Secretariat of the Council of the EU   | Ev 2 |



# Written evidence

## Written evidence from the Directorate for Resources, European Parliament

### EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT—DG PERSONNEL

#### by nationality and function group

au 01/01/2013

<i>F.Group</i>	<i>AD</i>	<i>AST</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>II</i>	<i>III</i>	<i>IV</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Nat.							
AT	34	37		1		3	75
BE	185	601	63	50	32	17	948
BG	71	56		8	2	8	145
CY	8	10					18
CZ	73	58		4	1	4	140
DE	245	212	1	11	8	19	496
DK	70	65		1	2	1	139
EE	56	37		4		4	101
ES	177	243	15	15	9	7	466
FI	104	87		1		1	193
FR	226	405	44	44	40	12	771
GB	152	132		5	5	7	301
GR	114	122	7	5	6	4	258
HR	2			30	11	44	87
HU	95	61		6	4	4	170
IE	29	75		4	1	4	113
IT	214	314	29	30	12	17	616
LT	61	46	1	2	1	4	115
LU	13	91	2		2		108
LV	61	38		2	3	2	106
MT	44	25		2		1	72
NL	79	70	2		1	3	155
PL	126	106	8	12	4	11	267
PT	101	138	18	4		4	265
RO	87	79	2	11	3	7	189
SE	66	63		4	2	3	138
SI	56	43		2	1	4	106
SK	65	53		3	3	4	128
AUTRE	1	2		1			4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2615</b>	<b>3269</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>6,690</b>

**Written evidence from the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU**  
**STAFF OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU, 1 JUNE 2013**

Situation au 01/06/2013

Répartition des fonctionnaires au SGC

	Répartition par nationalité et groupe de fonctions/grade																												
	BG	BE	CZ	DK	DE	EE	GR	ES	FR	IE	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	TOTAL	
AD 16					1			2		1					1				1	1	1							2	10
AD 15		4	1					2	2	2	3					1										1		1	22
AD 14		7	1	5	5	7	7	4	2	7				1	1	2	1	2	7	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	7	79
AD 13	1	17	2	10	22	1	11	23	8	3	13				1			6		1	15			1	10	5	8	159	
AD 12		13		6	18		14	18	10	2	12					1			11	1	13	1			19	6	15	160	
AD 11		18	1	6	11		8	10	10	2	11							6		2	9			12	6	5	117		
AD 10		1	16		8		6	2	13	1	6							1	1	2	1	2	6	1	1	4	3	80	
AD 9	1	13	5	2	8	2	2	6	12	2	2		3	2			2	2	2	6	3	3	3	3	5	3	2	89	
AD 8	2	10	2	2	3	6	3	4	8	1	5		4	10	2	5	2	1	3	9	4	1	2	4	3	1	1	98	
AD 7	4	6	14	3	8	11	2	1	8	3	3	1	10	14		21	5			23	1	7	13	12	3	2	1	176	
AD 6	17	5	11	4	1	11		3	7		2		6	5		7	1	1	1	7	1	18	11	1	1	2	2	135	
AD 5	11	6	4	8	7		3	5	5	1	5		2	6		2	7	5	1	5	2	15	8	4	1	8	7	128	
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>1253</b>	
<b>%</b>	<b>3,0%</b>	<b>9,2%</b>	<b>3,3%</b>	<b>3,7%</b>	<b>7,7%</b>	<b>2,5%</b>	<b>4,6%</b>	<b>6,6%</b>	<b>6,9%</b>	<b>1,5%</b>	<b>5,6%</b>	<b>0,1%</b>	<b>2,1%</b>	<b>3,0%</b>	<b>0,5%</b>	<b>3,2%</b>	<b>1,5%</b>	<b>3,0%</b>	<b>1,2%</b>	<b>4,5%</b>	<b>4,9%</b>	<b>3,7%</b>	<b>3,1%</b>	<b>3,1%</b>	<b>4,6%</b>	<b>3,0%</b>	<b>4,3%</b>	<b>100 %</b>	

**Groupe de fonctions AST**

	Répartition par nationalité et groupe de fonctions/grade																												
	BG	BE	CZ	DK	DE	EE	GR	ES	FR	IE	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	TOTAL	
AST 11		3			1			3	3		4							1			1							1	17
AST 10		5		2				1			2										3					1		1	15
AST 9		18		2	4			3	2	1	4				1			2	3								2	43	
AST 8		24		2	6			9	9	5	13							2			10				3		4	88	
AST 7		57		11	14			27	41	8	26							8			25				3	1	9	241	
AST 6		52		9	8			20	19	5	21							2	2		27				14	11	7	207	
AST 5		49			5	2	6	23	7	3	37				1	1	1	3		2	11		1	1	16	8	2	179	
AST 4	4	42	4	1	10	1	5	17	9		18	1	1	1	3	5	1	3	3	6	2	3	3	5	13	4	4	165	
AST 3	1	71	12	1	2	4	7	10	16	2	10		6	2	14	2	1	2	1	20	3	3	5	8	5	2	1	208	
AST 2	11	40	17	3	1	6	4	7	7	1	4	1	5	11	1	11	2	1	1	11	4	14	9	6	8	1	1	186	
AST 1	7	13	13	2	5	8	1	1	1	5	6	2	14	14		5	8		1	6	3	4	10	9	5	1	2	146	
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>1495</b>	
<b>%</b>	<b>1,5%</b>	<b>25,0%</b>	<b>3,1%</b>	<b>2,2%</b>	<b>3,7%</b>	<b>1,4%</b>	<b>5,3%</b>	<b>9,0%</b>	<b>4,2%</b>	<b>2,3%</b>	<b>9,7%</b>	<b>0,3%</b>	<b>1,7%</b>	<b>1,9%</b>	<b>0,4%</b>	<b>2,4%</b>	<b>0,9%</b>	<b>1,3%</b>	<b>0,7%</b>	<b>3,0%</b>	<b>6,0%</b>	<b>1,6%</b>	<b>1,9%</b>	<b>1,9%</b>	<b>4,5%</b>	<b>1,8%</b>	<b>2,3%</b>	<b>100 %</b>	

	Répartition par nationalité et groupe de fonctions/grade																											
	BG	BE	CZ	DK	DE	EE	GR	ES	FR	IE	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	TOTAL
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>2748</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>2,2%</b>	<b>17,8%</b>	<b>3,2%</b>	<b>2,8%</b>	<b>5,5%</b>	<b>1,9%</b>	<b>4,8%</b>	<b>7,9%</b>	<b>5,5%</b>	<b>1,9%</b>	<b>7,8%</b>	<b>0,2%</b>	<b>1,9%</b>	<b>2,4%</b>	<b>0,4%</b>	<b>2,8%</b>	<b>1,2%</b>	<b>2,0%</b>	<b>0,9%</b>	<b>3,7%</b>	<b>5,5%</b>	<b>2,5%</b>	<b>2,4%</b>	<b>2,5%</b>	<b>4,6%</b>	<b>2,3%</b>	<b>3,2%</b>	<b>100 %</b>



ISBN 978-0-215-05984-0



9 780215 059840

