

The Paschke Report

Report on the Special Inspection of 14 German Embassies in the Countries of the European Union

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FOREWORD

Acting on the instructions of the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, I carried out from January to August 2000 a special inspection of Germany's bilateral embassies in Austria, Belgium, Britain, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. The purpose of the inspection was to determine how the demands on our embassies in EU countries have changed as a result of European integration and what organizational conclusions should be drawn from this.

I spent several days at each embassy where I held intensive discussions with the ambassador as well as many members of staff from all sections and services and observed the actual working of the embassy. As instructed, I also met senior government officials in our partner countries as well as parliamentarians and representatives of the political parties, business, the media and social and cultural life, and also visited local German institutions such as chambers of commerce, the Goethe Institutes and schools.

Suggestions for specific organizational changes on the ground I discussed directly with the ambassadors concerned.

At the end of each inspection I prepared a report on the embassy, its work and staffing, which was first submitted for his information to the ambassador and then forwarded to the head of the Central Directorate-General.

To obtain a more complete picture of our official presence in EU countries I also visited a number of consulates.

The following report contains conclusions based on many different observations, assessments and impressions and makes recommendations on the future structure and functioning of the embassies inspected as well as the relationship between them and Head Office.

SUMMARY

European integration has had a powerful impact on intergovernmental cooperation among EU members.

Heads of state and government, foreign and other ministers regularly meet round European negotiating tables, call one another and have frequent informal contacts. Staff in the various ministries in the 14 capitals communicate directly with their opposite numbers and many ministries have liaison officers from partner governments. Within the EU area joint committees, working groups and other consultation mechanisms have created such a dense network and generated such a huge flow of information that certain functions of traditional diplomacy have become superfluous. Ambassadors in Europe no longer need to negotiate with host country governments or hand over letters; formal *démarches* also tend to be rare, if only because bilateral problems between EU members are also a rarity.

However, the number of themes and issues which are the common concern of all European partners is constantly increasing. Hence the range of subjects calling for intra-Union dialogue and consultation grows ever wider.

The fact that political leaders know each other well as well as the volume, ease and speed of communication in the age of information technology have resulted in a situation where communication between governments usually takes place without the intervention and often even the knowledge of the embassies.

Nevertheless, embassies in Europe have not become obsolete.

Among our 14 partner governments there is not a single one that would support such a view. The opposite is in fact the case. Almost all partners agree Europe has definitely imposed new tasks on their embassies. Some have even increased their embassy staffs in EU countries – notably in Berlin, by the way – or are about to do so; others have decided to open embassies in countries where they have hitherto had no presence.

There is a general consensus that European cooperation can only thrive where it is sustained and underpinned by stable, close, trouble-free bilateral relations between EU members.

Clearly there are certain functions – conducting formal negotiations with host country governments, for example – which our embassies in EU countries no longer need to perform. There has also been a change in the scale and importance of briefing home governments. Trade promotion is nowadays generally the task of other actors.

Today, however, embassies face new, additional challenges, particularly in the realm of public diplomacy, i.e. explaining and putting across to the wider public in partner countries what Germany is trying to achieve in the European integration process, as well as promoting Germany as an attractive place in which to invest and do business.

Our embassies' role in keeping an overall view of the whole spectrum of relations with our respective partners, coordinating individual aspects and analyzing political developments continues to be of cardinal importance. Certain traditional functions remain important – some increasingly so indeed – such as consular services for German tourists and permanent residents or fostering cultural contacts with our European neighbours, promoting the German language and interest in higher education in Germany.

I found, in short, that all our European partners continue to attach great importance to the role of German embassies in particular, for Germany as the biggest EU partner is also seen as the most important.

A further obvious fact – but one I consider nonetheless significant – is that the 14 EU partners and our relations with them are anything but uniform. There are notable differences which should be taken into account also in terms of our embassies' future structure.

In conclusion, I would point out that over the past few years there has developed alongside bilateral and multilateral diplomacy a new type of “European diplomacy” with its own functions and characteristics that should be reflected also in the organization and functioning of our embassies in Europe.

To this end I make a number of recommendations at the end of my report.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

I. The role of the ambassador/What is “public diplomacy”?

A German ambassador in EU countries is no longer what he was in former days: the negotiator and interpreter of our foreign policy interests. Today he is above all a communicator and mediator of German EU positions vis-à-vis all sections of the politically informed public in his host country. His main business is not discreet and confidential dealings with the foreign ministry but public diplomacy aimed at explaining and canvassing support for our European policy among government circles, Parliament, the political parties, the business community, the social partners, the media and representatives of academic and cultural life. To meet this challenge, he must build up and cultivate a dense and stable network of contacts in all areas of society. To be credible and convincing in this context he must of course be up-to-date on all the main issues on the current European agenda. Given the keen interest taken by all our partners in Germany's views on key EU topics, he will usually find a ready audience. Nevertheless, a great deal depends on his personal communication skills, which he should have the opportunity to train and refine.

(Recommendation No. 1)

Wherever possible, the ambassador should be sufficiently fluent in the partner's language to be able to make speeches, participate in discussions, give interviews etc.

(Recommendation No. 2)

Especially in the smaller EU countries where English is fairly widely understood, our diplomats must nevertheless make a serious effort to learn the language. That is crucial if our demand for the wider use of German as an EU working language is to be credible. Speaking the language clearly also allows them better contact with our partners and helps win their good will.

What is public diplomacy? Certainly nothing sensationally new and many ambassadors are already highly proficient performers in this area. What is new, however, is that especially in Europe public diplomacy is viewed as the number one priority over the whole spectrum of issues.

I intentionally avoid using the German term “Öffentlichkeitsarbeit” (public relations) with rather different connotations. The English words “lobbying” and “networking” give a better indication of what public diplomacy really is: reaching out to people in the host country, actively communicating through ongoing dialogue with all sections of the informed public in order to generate interest in and understanding for both our European and bilateral concerns.

- **Reaching out**

The ambassador himself must seek dialogue, offer his services as speaker, give interviews, take part in public events (symposia, conferences, panels, talk shows) and show a prominent profile.

- **Ongoing dialogue**

Building up and maintaining a network of contacts requires a constant focus on the target group, the repeated demonstration of interest in the partner. Only by that means can mutual trust be established.

- **All sections of the informed public**

In today's Europe policy-making is no longer just the concern of the select few, it requires the support of the democratic majority as well as public opinion in the country in question. We therefore have an active interest in ensuring that not only our partner governments but also all relevant sections of society are informed about and interested in Germany and its policies.

- **Generating understanding**

Understanding presupposes knowledge. Let us have no illusions about the extent of our partners' information on Germany. Despite open borders, foreign travel, television and the internet Europeans remain pretty much strangers to each other and there is still considerable prejudice especially as far as Germany is concerned. Public diplomacy must therefore seek both to create a more informed and balanced picture of Germany and to demonstrate our own interest in our European partners. That makes for good will.

- **Our European concerns**

The Brussels agenda is increasingly dominated by issues that clearly impinge on domestic policies as well. New security and defence concepts, the creation of a common area of justice in Europe, EU enlargement towards the East: these are all matters that interest Europe's man in the street. It is important he should know and understand what Germany's views on such matters are.

- **Our bilateral concerns**

While there is obviously an increasingly European dimension to public affairs within the EU, it would nonetheless be mistaken to think the whole spectrum of relations between European partners has been “europeanized”. The bilateral relationship between two countries in Europe continues to have its own character and dynamic, in which history, geography, language and many other factors all play a part.

In no member country to date does the term “European Union” carry the positive emotional connotations associated with such words as “home country” or “native land”. Yet the relationship between two European countries or nations always has an emotional side, as is obvious not only from international football matches. Public diplomacy must take this into account. The ambassador can help give Germany’s image in his host country a human face, his own, in other words.

Public diplomacy is confined neither to particular themes nor to sophisticated intellectual or expert discussions. A natural, laid-back approach aimed at the general public may at times be far more appropriate than erudite discourse. Thorough background knowledge must be combined with skill and creativity in presentation.

Public diplomacy must focus not just on the capital but seek to reach people throughout the country.

Obviously, given his status the ambassador will be particularly in demand but other embassy members, too, should be active in this field.

II. The relationship between embassies and Head Office

In the past, by tradition as well as for objective reasons, a certain geographical and psychological distance between head office and our missions abroad was part and parcel of our Foreign Service culture. Today this is clearly obsolete. In the age of electronic communication distance no longer has any real relevance.

Nor, at least where Europe is concerned, is there much validity in the old argument that our headquarters staff, by reason of their familiarity with the whole spectrum of foreign policy, automatically have the superior expertise.

The reality is quite different. In the Berlin E2 Directorate there is usually only one and often only “half” a desk officer with an intimate knowledge of an EU partner’s affairs. At the embassies, by contrast, there are always several officers at different levels concerned with all aspects of our relations with the host country on a day-to-day basis. That clearly has organizational implications. The various documents needed in Berlin (briefings for the minister, draft speeches, reports, information for visiting politicians, dossier contributions) should normally be prepared by the embassies and be recognizable as embassy products. Any comments added or diverging opinions expressed by the responsible division in Berlin should likewise be recognizable as such.

(Recommendation No. 3)

Instead of submitting regular routine reports – country reports, for instance – embassies can simply update such reports in their computer files, transmitting them online only on request.

(Recommendation No. 4)

Where briefing is concerned, embassies should generally first sound out whether briefing is wanted on a particular subject. Berlin should conduct the ongoing dialogue with embassies as if embassy staff were in fact members of the country division on the ground.

This new thinking in relations between Berlin and embassies in our EU partner countries also calls for better management of the information flow from Berlin to the embassies. At present our missions receive a veritable flood of information from Berlin, Brussels and the Presidency capital. Few have the personnel resources to deal with it properly, but yet they need concise, up-to-date and reliable information on the details of the EU agenda and particularly Germany’s positions on the main topics of negotiation in order to fulfil their public diplomacy function.

In all the embassies I visited it was recognized that the European Affairs Directorate-General now provides much better background information on German EU positions. However, there is still a long way to go in terms of optimal EU information management, especially in fields for which the Foreign Office is not directly responsible.

(Recommendation No. 5)

The post of EU affairs officer at our embassies in Europe has proved very successful. Some of our partners have indeed decided to follow suit.

Such officers are particularly valuable of course when they have relevant EU experience from previous postings. This should be taken into account in planning postings and career development.

(Recommendation No. 6)

To make such posts still more useful (and at the same time narrow the distance between Berlin and the embassies), all EU affairs officers should meet twice-yearly at Brussels and Berlin for briefings and to share experience.

(Recommendation No. 7)

The same goes for our heads of mission in Europe. They should also meet regularly as a group in Berlin and Brussels for briefings on the latest EU developments and provide their own input into opinion-making processes. The outcome will be well worth the travel expenses incurred.

(Recommendation No. 8)

One aspect of particular significance for relations between Berlin and our embassies in EU capitals is the question how far Berlin should use the embassies to sound out our partners' negotiating positions in Brussels.

There are various schools of thought on this matter. Our British friends spend a lot of effort on this before every Council meeting using detailed London questionnaires. Others consider this unnecessary, as the COREPER meetings provide a sufficient indication of different partners' views. Others again simply lack the resources to systematically sound out partners' positions. In those EU member countries where negotiating decisions are taken only by a very small high-level group and often only at the last minute, it is in any case difficult if not wellnigh impossible to find out in advance what position they intend to adopt.

We ought to steer a middle course here. Our embassies should, as suggested above, seek a dialogue with our partners on those Brussels issues we consider most important, try to generate understanding for our position and gain a clearer idea of theirs. Any information on

that score should be immediately forwarded to Berlin. Even where nothing of any note is learned about our partners' views, explaining our own position will feed into our partners' decision-making process. And that in itself is worthwhile.

(Recommendation No. 9)

III. The “illusion of familiarity”

In no other part of the world do political leaders have such intensive and direct contacts with each other as in the EU. Between Germany and France the intensity of these contacts as well as the dense network of administrative links are quite unique.

Such familiarity, the easy informality typical of political leaders' dealings with one another, the personal friendships that develop between them – these are certainly welcome results of the integration of our continent, a yardstick of the EU's success, but they are also, as one of my interlocutors put it, “a very good thing fraught with a lot of risk”.

Ministers who meet round the negotiating table every four weeks gradually come to feel they not only know their opposite numbers intimately, including their strengths and weaknesses, but are also good judges of the political nuances behind their stated views as well as the political scene in their home countries. That, however, is manifestly an illusion.

In all capitals I visited I found a general consensus on the “illusion of familiarity”. Another view worth quoting is: “Proximity has not produced intimacy”. The reasons for this are obvious. Also in Europe politicians still think and act essentially in national categories. These vary widely and can only be properly gauged through continuous first-hand observation and experience.

Being on such familiar terms with one another, ministers often tend to discuss bilateral problems – and these exist of course even in Europe – “in the corridors” at EU meetings, generally in friendly, restrained language and omitting any awkward or unpleasant details. Not unfrequently, however, a real solution to the problem remains an illusion.

It is totally illusory, moreover, to believe that political leaders will be prepared to sacrifice any national interest merely out of friendship for a European partner.

Clearly therefore the illusion of familiarity requires a corrective. Only the German embassy on the spot can, by virtue of ongoing, meticulous, in-depth analysis, supply our political leaders with reliable information on the political thinking of their EU colleagues.

Only the embassy can ensure that bilateral problems between Berlin and the host country are dealt with comprehensively, taking into account all aspects of the problem, and also provide the necessary follow-up for general solutions agreed by the ministers.

And should a crisis arise on any particular issue, only the embassy can provide the necessary crisis management vis-à-vis the host country government and public.

Only the embassy is in a position to retain an overview of the entirety of relations between Germany and the host country, to correctly assess that country's national interests and to make recommendations on how best to interact with it in the EU context as in others.

This however requires the Ambassador to be present in bilateral meetings between high-ranking politicians, and where this is not possible, to be informed of the precise content of the talks. Regrettably this practice, which continues to be a matter of course for EU partners, has been eroded with German politicians. The illusion of familiarity is also to blame for this, inviting as it does the erroneous assumption that a high-level meeting makes follow-up talks with the host country's executive superfluous. Even if this were perhaps the case, excluding the ambassador in the host country could well create the impression that he does not have the complete confidence of his own government – no doubt an unintended consequence, but a highly damaging one nevertheless.

To further stress this point, let me say that in the EU, our partners continue to consider and treat their German ambassador as the responsible representative of and spokesman for Germany. Indeed, in the country to which he is posted an ambassador represents not just the Federal Foreign Office, but the whole of the Federal Government. His own government should therefore not make it harder for him to do his duty.

(Recommendation No. 10)

I will conclude this chapter with another quote from one of the capitals I visited: "Embassies within the EU will be needed as long as there are national interests. Embassies lubricate the entire machinery, they are the emergency repair shop, monitor and coordinator of the whole

web of relations – and they provide the management for the innumerable meetings between high-ranking politicians.”

IV. The importance of bilateral relations between EU countries

It is obvious that Europe can only function if it is built on a solid basis of close bilateral relations between the member states. My tour of inspection made me realize, just as clearly, how different Germany's bilateral relations with each of the 14 other EU states are.

Our relationship with our direct neighbours is naturally of a different character than that with geographically more distant member states.

Relations with our neighbours are taking on a further dimension due to cross-border regionalism, a rapidly developing EU phenomenon with a future, which I will refer to again later.

Relations with our Scandinavian partners have acquired new momentum thanks to the transfer of our capital and seat of government from Bonn to Berlin and our common border on the Baltic Sea.

In addition to such geographical givens, history has of course also had a formative influence on bilateral relations. In several EU member states the memory of the crimes of the Third Reich continues to be a factor which we must take very seriously; on the other hand, old friendships and special cultural affinities also play a defining role.

In some capitals common EU membership seems to be the most important element, taking precedence over everything else, even in bilateral relations; elsewhere relations with Germany are even now considered almost solely from a bilateral perspective.

What conclusions can be drawn? Relations between the 15 current EU member states are in fact not forged solely round the negotiating table in Brussels, but are still largely wrought in the various capitals, not just by visiting ministers, but also as before, through the permanent diplomatic missions in the host countries which are in charge of coordinating individual themes and embedding them in the broader framework of relations.

Some of our partners have even observed a trend towards a “new bilateralism” within the EU. They argue that given the increasing number of domestically contentious issues on the Brussels agenda and the tendency of the Heads of State or Government to deal with such issues themselves, the preparation of dossiers for European Council meetings is gradually being transferred from the General Affairs Council and COREPER back to the individual capitals, thus encouraging the formation of ad-hoc coalitions on these issues.

Whatever one may think of this “new bilateralism”, it is no doubt correct that civil society too will take ever more notice of the domestic relevance of the EU agenda and that our embassies will have to become actively involved in the public discussion on such topics in the partner countries.

V. Cross-border regionalism

European integration has almost completely eliminated the significance of internal borders. For most citizens, however, “Europe” does not yet inspire any emotional identification; it is just too big, too diverse, too impersonal to be perceived as a single entity.

Thus in many parts of our continent a more localized form of intensive cooperation across national boundaries is developing, between people, groups, districts, regions, public bodies, which are brought together by their direct propinquity, common history, economic links and shared interests – a sort of “Europeanization in miniature”.

Being a large country in the centre of Europe surrounded by many neighbours and having a federal structure, Germany has a particularly diverse wealth of experience of cross-border regionalism. Many of our EU partners too view this as an increasingly important new, forward-looking development in Europe which deserves the attention of all governments.

Our embassies and consulates in the EU have thus found another rewarding subject to monitor and report on, if I am right in assuming that the Federal Government is generally in favour of this tendency towards regional integration, or perhaps even promotes it, at least when it involves practical cooperation with synergy effects.

VI. The future core tasks of our missions in Europe

In spite of all the convincing arguments justifying their existence and necessity, the German missions in Europe cannot be exempted from the budgetary constraints the Foreign Service faces. In the last two years our missions in Europe have been considerably streamlined; my inspection too led to a few isolated cuts. And it has not gone unnoticed that individual fields within Europe now have to be given a different weight than they were ten or so years ago.

My overall conclusion is however that our embassies in the EU area do not have the capacity for further staff reductions and that even now they are obliged, depending on the size of the mission and the environment in which they work, to set clear priorities and are not able to undertake certain activities, as desirable as these may be.

It is therefore necessary that core tasks within each field are identified, tasks which will remain essential and indispensable in Europe for the foreseeable future.

This is attempted below, although I am aware that some leeway must be left given the difference in the bilateral practices in the fourteen (and following enlargement 20) host countries.

- **A** – As regards the embassies' political work, core tasks are analytical reporting and public diplomacy, as stated above.
- Reports no longer need to be comprehensive or in a flowing literary style, and should no longer waste any effort on conveying facts which are already known in Berlin from other sources; it should rather gauge the political mood in the host country and of its decision makers and elucidate the background reasons for this country taking the position it does on particular issues in Brussels or in bilateral relations with us.
- I have already defined "public diplomacy" in Chapter II. But it is worth repeating that dialogue with the government and civil society of the host country should cover all European and bilateral issues and that its quality depends on the standard and intensity of information flow from Berlin to the missions abroad.
- **B** – The business promotion undertaken by our embassies in Europe must in the future also follow the path of public diplomacy, i.e. maintaining a network of contacts in the principal business circles and in those sections of the executive which deal with economic issues.

- In addition to sounding out European economic issues, or rather the host countries' positions on these, the missions should also energetically publicize Germany as a location for business and investment.
- Our embassies must also be in a position, if necessary, to provide appropriate and effective assistance to German firms competing for public contracts for state and large-scale projects.
- The promotion of trade in the traditional sense is on the other hand now largely dealt with by a well-functioning network of chambers of commerce abroad, and broad economic briefing is available from so many other sources nowadays that the embassies should not usually compete.
- **C** – Cultural work remains a particularly important factor for Germany's image in the European partner states. Culture will continue to be defined nationally; the cultural diversity of our continent should be preserved.
- My impression is that Germany is reasonably represented in the range of cultural events put on commercially in the European capitals, in opera houses, concert halls and theatres, ballet performances, museums and on the exhibition circuit. The embassies and cultural organizations are rarely involved in such events, or at the most only marginally if only because they normally lack the funds to promote larger projects themselves.
- This shortage of funds is all the more keenly felt in those cultural fields which do not attract a large public, and by events in the provinces, outside the major centres.
- Overall my view of our current cultural work in Europe is pessimistic. What I missed in particular was a broad appeal. At best we reach a part of the elite. For most people in our partner countries Germany remains, in cultural terms too, uncharted territory. Interest in Germany is stagnating or even diminishing.
- I therefore view the following as the future core tasks for the cultural sections of our missions in Europe:
 - energetically promoting the German language, and
 - publicizing German universities and colleges.
- The cultural organizations too should be included in the overall strategy aimed at achieving wider resonance in the host countries, targeting new population groups, in particular young people, and arousing their curiosity for things German.
- (*Recommendation No. 11*)

- The administrative relationship between the embassies and intermediary organizations should on the other hand be reviewed to see whether the current system is still suited to today's world. In the cultural section of each mission one member of staff is occupied mainly with administrative work for the benefit of German schools, Goethe Institutes, etc. thus acting as a "screening" instance for domestic German authorities such as the Federal Office of Administration. The amount of red tape in this field urgently needs to be reduced.
- (*Recommendation No. 12*)
- **D** – Integration has so far had less effect on the legal and consular sections of our missions in Europe than one would perhaps have expected. At the most, the increased mobility of citizens has caused their services to be in greater demand. The issuing of visas to nationals of third states is the only area in which the Schengen accord has permanently reduced the workload for our legal and consular sections and consulates within the EU.
- Providing services for German nationals, be they tourists or long-term residents in the partner countries, will remain the main focus of legal and consular work in Europe for several decades to come. This service is in most host countries the only regular contact between the embassy and the German expatriates there, and the embassy should view this contact as being to a certain extent in its own interest, as a form of public diplomacy in the best sense.
- The target group of long-term residents is by the way growing in certain EU member states, for example in Spain, Portugal, France and Greece. A new dimension has unmistakably been added to consular services. Our citizens abroad continue to have high expectations of our missions, and the necessary preconditions for transferring certain consular functions to authorities of the host states do not yet exist.
- Even where relevant European guidelines form the basis for the competence of local agencies, the reality differs: the local council offices, social services, lawyers, notaries and courts who are theoretically responsible for various issues cannot be involved simply because of the language barrier or a lack of information.
- Nonetheless, during my inspections I identified a whole range of consular functions which could be "europeanized" without difficulty, if it were possible to convince German authorities that a certain administrative act, certificate, examination or certificate could

be handled by official agencies in the host country just as well as by the German missions abroad.

- (*Recommendation No. 13*)
- I also discovered that our charges for consular services, such as issuing passports or certifying documents, are at the lower end of the scale when compared with our partners and other countries around the world. Where our hands are not tied by EU agreements, we should consider raising our charges within moderate limits.
- (*Recommendation No. 14*)
- In addition to services for German nationals, I identified monitoring and influencing the harmonization of laws within the EU as a further focus of legal and consular work in Europe. This is by the way the task to which – in the larger EU countries – only a suitably qualified civil servant in the higher service (a fully qualified lawyer) must be assigned. Almost all other legal and consular work can be responsibly accomplished by our excellently trained civil servants of the higher-intermediate service.
- **E** – Press and political public relations work continues to be of great importance in Europe for the simple reason that it is a major part of public diplomacy, i.e. advertising Germany and German interests. Media representatives remain one of the most significant target groups of any embassy; regular dialogue with them is the key task of the press officer and naturally also of the ambassador himself.
- Monitoring the press is one of the standard daily duties in all missions abroad, and the reviews drawn up provide a source of information on the current political situation in the host country and make it possible to see how topics which relate to Germany are treated, and, where possible, to positively influence them.
- As regards press reviews for Berlin, a distinction must be drawn between the international status of our EU partners' media and the resulting interest in the comments they make about Germany. Only a few of our larger embassies still produce a daily press telegram, and I can see that this is a service, but it is in my opinion no longer a core task, because all really important print media can be viewed throughout Europe on the Internet; most missions in Europe correctly limit themselves to ad-hoc press reports, when a particular topic or particular statement needs to be brought to the attention of the Federal Government. A somewhat more comprehensive press report is however still required from those capitals where the local language is particularly difficult, such as Athens or Helsinki.

- *(Recommendation No. 15)*
- Political public relations work can differ from host country to host country, its intensity and creativity almost always dependent on the drive of the ambassador and the responsible desk officer.
- It is however clear that it is no longer printed brochures and glossy publications which provide the major vehicle for public relations, but information technology. Our missions must manage attractive, constantly updated homepages, which should be set up with professional assistance. It must be possible to request and receive information from our embassies via e- mail. All kinds of texts, announcements and documents must be distributed to target groups using electronic mailing lists.

(Recommendation No. 16)

- Invitations to come to Germany on themed visits remain a tested tool of public relations work.
- **F** – Protocol
- In view of the ever greater numbers of individual and official delegation visits within the EU, turning into a flurry in the country holding the six-month long presidency, our embassies in Europe must today provide considerable protocol services, including preparatory work, implementation, escorts, assistance and follow-up work. An excessive strain is thereby often put on the missions' infrastructure (e.g. the official cars and their drivers) and budgets. Outsourcing would certainly be better value for money.

(Recommendation No. 17)

- On the other hand high-level visitors will almost always have high expectations of our embassies and their protocol services, and our missions should also have a natural interest in ensuring that official guests from Germany find their visit well organized and are able to gain an accurate picture of the country and the local German mission.
- In other words, protocol services are to be viewed as a genuine, important part of an embassy's duties, indeed as a core task and not an extra burden.

VII. The role of specialist advisers from other ministries

The previous chapter described the core tasks of our embassies, which are in general undertaken by civil servants who are part of our Foreign Service. In reality, our presence abroad is also sustained by a range of personnel from other ministries and organs who

carry out specialist tasks in the embassies: the military attachés, agricultural, forestry, social and scientific experts, liaison officers from the Federal Criminal Police Office and Bundesbank, to name but a few.

The roles of these staff too have changed considerably as integration in Europe has progressed. Particularly noticeable is the intensified liaison with the relevant ministries of our partner governments. Their home ministries frequently charge such liaison staff with clarifying bilateral and European topics.

Generally speaking, the specialist advisers are well-integrated in the organization of the embassies, not only using their administrative infrastructure, but also making an active contribution to the services offered, e.g. by taking part in general briefings and by providing specialist input, as well as by assisting directly in the fulfilment of tasks which do not fall under their own area of responsibility, or by taking their turn on stand-by duty.

It cannot yet be said with certainty whether the increased networking between ministries in the EU will make certain specialist advisers in the embassies superfluous. We must however ensure that their job descriptions too are reviewed from time to time and that necessary changes are made; reductions in the number of permanent staff of any foreign mission must not lead to more advisers from other ministries being employed there than Foreign Service officers (as is already the case in some multilateral missions, where it is however justified).

Within Europe, we have scientific experts in London and Paris. They cover a huge, basically unmanageable field, and can therefore do no more than scratch the surface and maintain a few random contacts. It seems to me that it is necessary to draw up more precise task profiles for those working in this area.

(Recommendation No. 18)

A word of praise for the Federal Criminal Police Office liaison officers and their functions, which have been considerably increased in the past decade, in particular within the EU, and which now cover such diverse and important areas as the drug trade, organized crime, illegal immigration, human trafficking, money laundering, etc. I have the impression that an extraordinarily useful structure of professional cooperation in Europe has been created

here, which is indeed used every day. This is a side of integration in which our German liaison officers in particular have excelled.

VIII. Not just in Europe: the Foreign Service administration must be streamlined

On my tour of inspection it was repeatedly brought home to me just how many human resources are tied to the administration of our Service. The administrative outlay for the network of missions abroad is much too great, not just in Europe, but around the world. The Central Directorate-General is by far the largest department in the Federal Foreign Office. This is admittedly also the case in most Foreign Ministries in Europe, but the size of the German Directorate-General is particularly disproportional. In our embassies too, the heads of the chancery lead large teams responsible for personnel issues, administration and internal services.

This is not on the whole due to excessive red tape in the Federal Foreign Office, but is rather the consequence of standard German administrative practice, which applies to all Federal Ministries, and has as its aim multiple-level, unbroken control of all administrative matters involving expenditure and which obviously assumes that this is the only way in which employees can be prevented from committing irregularities and enriching themselves.

Given the structure of the Foreign Service, with 220 administrative units of all sizes spread over five continents, this administrative practice leads on occasion to absurd constraints and unnecessary procedural complications, a review of which is urgently needed. To name but a few examples of areas in which savings could be made by simplifying procedures, thus reducing individuals' workloads and shortening processing times, I would like to mention the following: the arrangements for moving house (e.g. from one posting to another), paying for official travel and trips home on leave, procurement abroad, the construction, acquisition and maintenance of official buildings, the operation of official vehicles, etc. All our resource management and payment agency procedures must be scrutinized.

(Recommendation No. 19)

Significant improvements to our administrative procedures can only be achieved in cooperation with other German ministries, in particular the Federal Ministry of Finance and the Federal Ministry of the Interior, as well as the Federal Court of Audit. The agreement of the legislature is also required for fundamental reforms. Greater delegation of responsibility to the missions abroad, greater use of flat-rate payments, and in some areas also outsourcing – these must be the goals for a leaner administration within the Federal Foreign Office.

The following arguments will surely prove of use in the discussion which will have to come:

- The German foreign service has already had to accept so many personnel cutbacks that the remaining staffing level is urgently needed to carry out the core substantive tasks and should no longer be used to any significant extent for internal administration.
- Excessive internal controls are nonsensical, even for business process re-engineering purposes, if the monitoring involves costs disproportional to the monetary value of the function being monitored.
- Other foreign ministries in the EU are far ahead of us when it comes to de-bureaucratization and a lean administration.

The image of Germans as especially thorough administrators is undented; nobody has yet suggested that we are also particularly modern administrators.

IX. Basic and further training, exchanges

In the course of my private talks with our staff and with colleagues in the fourteen EU capitals I became aware that, considering the importance of European integration for our country's future, the Federal Government does not yet have a sufficient number of EU specialists at its disposal. If it is correct that we can now speak of a new category called "European diplomacy", then we must respond better to this in our training programmes at interministerial level. The Federal Foreign Office is without a doubt in a position to coordinate such a task.

All federal ministries should assign more young officers to the EU Commission as “stagiaires”. Special EU expertise should be rewarded in a “fast track” career.
(*Recommendations No. 20, 21 and 22*)

Finally, I would like to emphasize the extraordinary usefulness of the exchange programmes which the Foreign Office has established with other foreign ministries in Europe, some of which have run for many years. Young civil servants who have been completely integrated in a partner government’s foreign service for a year or two, and who thereafter are seconded to our embassy in that country, have the personal contacts, a firm grasp of our relations and a deep understanding of the host country and so are particularly qualified to play a special role in promoting the integration of Germany and its European partners.

(*Recommendation No. 23*)

Summary of Recommendations

1. Increased weight should be given to communication skills in the basic and further training of our personnel. Rhetoric and media training should be intensified. Pre-post training for heads of mission should include refresher courses on such techniques.
2. All personnel in the higher and higher intermediate service, from head of service down, should attend an intensive language course prior to a foreign posting in order to acquire basic competency in the local language. The duration of such a course would depend on the difficulty of the language, but should be at least four months. The personnel should additionally be required to develop their language skills during the course of their posting in that country.
3. The Foreign Office in Berlin must enable missions to contribute directly and independently to the production of working papers needed in Berlin, providing them with concrete orientation and then letting them take the lead.
4. Routine reports are to be replaced by information stored by the missions and available from them upon request.
5. The quality of the information flow to the foreign missions on EU topics must be improved and the quantity reduced. This is especially true for fields for which the Federal Foreign Office is not directly responsible.

6. The post of EU affairs officer should preferably be filled by staff who already have some EU experience.
7. (and 8). EU affairs officers and heads of missions should meet in Berlin or Brussels for briefings and exchanges of information more frequently than hitherto, at least once every six months.
8. (and 7). EU affairs officers and heads of missions should meet in Berlin or Brussels for briefings and exchanges of information more frequently than hitherto, at least once every six months.
9. Our embassies in the EU must be actively involved in promoting Germany's positions and sounding out those taken by other EU members on topics under negotiation in Brussels. Systematic cooperation between Berlin, our Representation to the EU in Brussels and the relevant embassy is needed.
10. The Federal Foreign Office should ensure that our ambassadors in EU countries are regularly involved in bilateral meetings between high-ranking politicians or at least fully briefed about such meetings so that they can discharge their duties in the host country in a coherent and well-informed manner.
11. Our cultural policy strategy in Europe needs to be rethought. The Federal Foreign Office's Cultural Directorate-General must work with the cultural organizations to draw up new strategies aimed at promoting of the German language, canvassing for German universities and finding ways to reach a wider public.
12. The Cultural Directorate-General is also called upon to make arrangements with the cultural organizations and the Federal Office of Administration which will free the personnel in the cultural sections of the missions abroad from various monitoring and administrative tasks currently performed for German schools and Goethe Institutes, etc.
13. The Legal Directorate-General should draw up a list of all administrative acts for which German authorities have so far considered the participation of a German consulate indispensable, and seek arrangements with these authorities according to which they will recognize as equivalent similar administrative acts by local official agencies within Europe (for example, the collection of number plates for vehicles whose registration has been changed from Germany to another EU country).
14. Our charges for consular services should be reviewed, and where possible moderately increased.

15. The Foreign Office and the Press and Information Office of the Federal Government should jointly review the extent to which full press reports from the European capitals are in fact still needed. Special attention should be paid to the question how many people actually read the reports.
16. The IT equipment, both hardware and software, of our missions in Europe must be state-of-the-art, especially in order to guarantee adequate network options in the host country. The embassies should turn to professional consultants to help them design their homepages.
17. The car pools of our larger embassies in Europe are currently designed to cope with a ceaseless stream of delegations and are thus oversized. In almost all capital cities one finds limousine companies with which reliable transport at better value for delegations and individual guests could be arranged. All embassies should negotiate such framework contracts and inform visitors in advance that the costs incurred are to be assumed by the agency of the sending state.
18. Together with representatives of the relevant ministries and German scientists, the Central DG should organize a symposium to discuss and draw up a precise job profile for scientific advisers in German embassies.
19. All missions abroad are to be requested to report on where and how their administrative procedures could be simplified and improved. A working group in Berlin should assess the results and then discuss those changes which only require the approval of the executive with the domestic ministries, and should also initiate draft bills in those cases where the desired change requires legislative action.
20. Internal Foreign Office training on EU affairs must be intensified. It should also be asked whether certain training events could be organized at an interministerial level, i.e. also involving junior civil servants from other federal ministries.
21. More young staff should be seconded to the EU Commission as “stagiaires”.
22. Special skills and experience of EU matters should be rewarded in a fast track career.
23. It is now time to evaluate the experiences we have of civil servant exchanges in Europe and to systematize them for the future. What expectations does the Federal Foreign Office have of the civil servants which it sends on exchanges? What conclusions does it draw from their final reports? How can the Federal Foreign Office best use those civil servants whom it receives on exchanges?