

European External Action Service
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Brussels, 2 March 2021

*Dear Honorable High Representative and Vice-President Borrell,
Dear Mr. Stefano Sannino, Secretary-General of European External Action Service,*

We would like to share with you our great concern regarding the lack of progress in tackling geographical imbalances in the distribution of staff in the EEAS, namely the under-representation of Romanian nationals in your service and notably in management positions.

It is a fact that most of the countries that joined the European Union after 2004 continue to be strongly under-represented in the staff and management of European institutions in general. This imbalance however, is especially acute in the EEAS, where management positions occupied by nationals of countries that joined the EU after 2004 are considerably fewer than their respective share in the Union's population. Unfortunately, Romania makes no exception.

The figures provided by the EEAS in the context of the 2019 discharge procedure show that there is no Romanian occupying a management position in headquarters. Furthermore, they indicate a weak representation in delegations. This situation is unacceptable, especially given the fact that Romania is the sixth country of the European Union in terms of population size.

Let us kindly remind you of Recital 10 of the Council Decision 2010/427/EU establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service, which notes that "Recruitment should be based on merit whilst ensuring adequate geographical and gender balance. The staff of the EEAS should comprise a meaningful presence of nationals from all the Member States". The Article 6(6) in the same decision notes that "Recruitment to the EEAS shall be based on merit whilst ensuring adequate geographical and gender balance. The staff of the EEAS shall comprise a meaningful presence of nationals from all the Member States", while Article 6(8) notes that "The High Representative shall establish the selection procedures for EEAS staff, which shall be undertaken through a transparent procedure based on merit with the objective of securing the services of staff of the highest standard of ability, efficiency and integrity, while ensuring adequate geographical and gender balance, and a meaningful presence of nationals from all Member States in the EEAS".

The European Parliament has been systematically calling for the High Representative, the Presidents of the Council and the Commission to take all necessary measures to redress geographical representativity at senior levels and at all other grades and positions in order to

foster and encourage political ownership of the EEAS by officials and Member States alike, and as required by Article 6(6) and 6(8) of the EEAS Decision.¹

Therefore, it is with great urgency that the EEAS should address its obligation to ensure geographical balance and urgently address the under-representation of Romanians. In this context we would like to highlight that there are ongoing selection processes that should provide a window of opportunity to improve without delay the geographical balance in the EEAS.

We will closely follow the improvements that will be made by the EEAS, as these will be important factors in assessing its overall performance, including in the context of the ongoing discharge procedure.

We would be happy to meet with you at your earliest convenience to further discuss the above mentioned topics.

Respectfully yours,

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¹ See for example the Recommendation to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission, to the Council and to the Commission on the 2013 review of the organisation and the functioning of the EEAS (2012/2253 (INI)).

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