



Channels of Cooperation: A Case Study of Slovenia's Presidency of the EU

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Abstract

The success of an EU Presidency depends closely on the cooperation it achieves with other actors in the European political arena. This paper analyses the cooperation established between Slovenian public servants and diplomats and their European counterparts during their country's term in office as Presidency of the EU in the first half of 2008. The findings are based on a survey conducted among 667 Slovenian public servants, experts and diplomats directly involved in the policy-making process during Slovenia's Presidency. It looks into the nature, frequency and importance (as rated by Slovenes themselves) of formal and informal cooperation and contacts of Slovenian public servants, experts and diplomats with officials of the Council Secretariat and European Commission as well as national representatives of the other member states. The analysis distinguishes between responses by capital- and Brussels-based staff and also reflects the views of traditional diplomats at Slovenian diplomatic and consular representations. The paper analyses their perception on the cooperation established in selected policy fields in which the Presidency assumed different roles: organiser, broker, leader and national representative.

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CHANNELS OF COOPERATION: A CASE STUDY OF SLOVENIA'S PRESIDENCY OF THE EU

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Introduction

A Presidency of the EU can be evaluated from various angles, depending on one's aims. It is possible to evaluate the progress made in EU policy-making during one Presidency's term in office; its success can be measured against the declared interests of the Presidency or against its declared goals or priorities; against the ('objective') benchmarks set by the evaluator; or in terms of performance in various 'Presidency tasks' and/or 'Presidency roles', corrected for specific characteristics of the presiding country in question.¹ Regardless of which of these angles the evaluation focuses on, the performance of the Presidency will be closely linked to the cooperation established between the Presidency and various other actors in European policy-making.

This paper looks into cooperation between Slovenian public servants and diplomats who worked on policy matters and their European counterparts during the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of 2008. The research question it seeks to answer is: who got what kinds of cooperation and from whom?

The 'who' are the actors of the Presidency. This paper focuses exclusively on the Presidency's point of view. The ministers and the highest ranking diplomats posted both in the capital (Ljubljana) and at Slovenia's Permanent Representation (PermRep) in Brussels are just the top of the pyramid composed of hundreds of public servants who deal with policy dossiers. The most crucial organisational characteristic of any Presidency is the division of labour between the capital and the Permanent Representation in Brussels. The paper distinguishes primarily between these two types of actors but the analysis also includes traditional diplomats in Slovenian diplomatic and consular representations.

The 'what' encompasses information on the issue in question, information on the positions of other stakeholders, as well as various modes of cooperation established with them. The Presidency's task of a manager of the Council's business includes agenda-setting and providing leadership at thousands of meetings that need to carefully follow proper procedures. Its brokerage function requires the use of various negotiating techniques – in performing all these tasks the Presidency does not or cannot afford to act on its own.

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¹ On the complexity of evaluating the Presidency of the EU, see Quaglia & Moxon-Browne (2006) and Schout & Vanhoonaeker (2006). While the first study presents a comparative analysis of the Italian and Irish Presidencies in 2003, the latter develops a contingency theory to evaluate a Presidency's performance and tests it in the case of the 2001 French Presidency. For a comprehensive evaluation, encompassing the internal coordination, European-level achievements and logistical efficiency, within the triangle of neutral Presidency, leadership-oriented Presidency and its role of the national representative, see IOB (2008) in the context of the Dutch 2004 EU Presidency.

The latter observation already touches on the question ‘from whom’. The Council Secretariat functions in the Presidency’s service. But there are other actors as well: other EU institutions, member states, domestic institutions and various interest groups.²

In seeking to answer the above question, the paper analyses the cooperation of the Slovenian public servants and diplomats during Slovenia’s term in office as the Presidency of the Council of the EU with their European counterparts. It focuses on a few analytical elements. It distinguishes between the Slovenian public servants and diplomats who i) worked in Ljubljana or ii) were based at the Permanent Representation in Brussels and iii) the traditional diplomats at the diplomatic and consular representations of the Republic of Slovenia. It looks at the nature, importance and frequency of cooperation and informal contacts with various actors. It distinguishes between policy fields falling under the different pillars within the European governance system and with respect to different roles the Presidency undertook. It looks specifically at the cooperation in: i) foreign policy, ii) justice and home affairs, iii) the common agricultural policy, iv) innovation and knowledge society and v) climate and energy.

The analysis is based on the results of the survey conducted among Slovenian public servants immediately following the conclusion of the Slovenian Presidency.³ The questionnaire, composed of 40 closed-type questions, was sent to the public servants working on substantive policy issues via the dissemination list of the Presidency sub-group for human resources, which included public servants based in Ljubljana. Additionally it was sent to all the expert and diplomatic staff based at the Permanent Representation in Brussels and to all the ambassadors of the Republic of Slovenia. The response rate was just under two-thirds, but just over half of the questionnaires had been completely filled in, while the rest were missing answers to at least one of the questions, with most missing out on questions towards the end of the questionnaire.

This paper first elaborates on the research question and the analytical rationale behind the analysis. It explains the ‘who’, the ‘what’ and ‘from whom’ and applies them to the specific characteristics of the organisation, priorities and interests of the Slovenian Presidency of the EU. The second section presents the results and the analysis. The conclusion evaluates the results and suggests lessons that can be drawn from the specific experience of the organisation of the Slovenian Presidency. The methodology of the study and the limits to its analysis are elaborated in Annex 1.

1. Cooperation with the Presidency: The who, what and from whom

1.1 The main actors

Conducting the Presidency places an enormous demand on human resources in any government. No matter how big or small the country, although it is clearly more strenuous for small

² In the period from January 2007 to June 2008, the first ‘trio Presidency’ took place, adding another cooperative and coordinating element into the Presidency business. However, since cooperation among the three Presidencies was to a large extent confined to the preparation of the joint 18-month programme and each trio-partner conducted its respective Presidency largely on its own (see Kajnč, 2008a), cooperation on the same ‘what’ with the trio partners during the conduct of the Presidency, as well as with the interest groups, is not analysed in this paper.

³ The survey was conducted by the Centre of International Relations (CIR) at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana. The project is led by Prof. Dr. Marjan Svetličič, Head of the CIR, and Dr. Sabina Kajnč. The questionnaire included aspects of training and competences for the conduct of the Presidency, problems encountered during the Presidency, cooperation within Slovenia’s administration and with the two trio partners as well as work in the Council working groups and general assessment of Slovenia’s Presidency (see Svetličič & Kajnč, 2008 and Kajnč & Svetličič, 2008). For details on methodology, see Annex 1.

countries, the Presidency period requires a massive reshuffling of work in the administration to cover the regular business and the Presidency tasks as well as additional personnel, often with very specific skills. This is even more challenging in the case of the first-time Presidencies of the Council, where the government needs to find the optimum mode of organisation, extra hiring, reshuffling and training of personnel. Some 2,775 public servants were officially involved in the Slovenian Presidency. An extra 300 were hired and the Government also relied on 245 students who were employed as interns.⁴ Of these, 1,151 worked on substantive policy matters, i.e. on dossiers and overall management of the Presidency. The Presidency's sub-group on the human resources dissemination list included 454 public servants directly working on the dossiers. The Permanent Representation was staffed with 167 experts and diplomats (the number rose for the purposes of the Presidency from the previous 53, since the time of accession).

Early in the preparations of the Presidency (in July 2006), in line with the practice of several smaller EU states, Slovenia's government decided to run a so-called 'Brussels-based' (as opposed to a 'capital-based') Presidency. This model's main features consist not only of the better equipped Permanent Representation in terms of the size of its staff, but also the nature of the coordination (horizontal and vertical) and the mandate given to the diplomats at the Permanent Representation. Political guidance, choice of priorities, negotiating mandate, control and preparation of national positions remain in the capital, while the horizontal coordination takes place to a much larger extent among the experts and diplomats at the Permanent Representation itself and not (only) between the ministries in the capital. For the duration of the Presidency, the experts and diplomats at the Permanent Representation also do not fall clearly in the previously – during the period of 'normal' membership – established vertical chain of command based on strict hierarchy, as the urgency and importance of reporting and consultations argue for breaking the strict rules. Also because of its distance from the capital and the highest decision-makers in the government, diplomats at the Permanent Representation are normally given a much broader negotiating mandate – especially, but not exclusively, on issues in which the Presidency is not pursuing its own clear interests – than in 'normal' times or than it is usual for their counterparts in cases of capital-based Presidencies. The Presidency's diplomats in member states' and third-country capitals, though far from the main corridors of intergovernmental bargaining and community politics in Brussels, take on the role of external representative of the EU in their respective capitals. Their contacts with the Council Secretariat are limited, but they are frequently in touch with the Commission through its representations in the member states and delegations in third countries. In the second part the analysis primarily distinguishes among the Slovenian Presidency actors between those from the Permanent Representation, those from the capital, and diplomats in member states' and third-country capitals to analyse the differences in 'what' and 'from whom'.

1.2 Types of cooperation

One can distinguish between the following types of cooperation: i) for the purpose of the agenda-setting, ii) receipt of substantive information on an issue, iii) information on the position of other actors, iv) information on procedures and v) in managing the dossier, including the use of strategy and negotiating techniques. In terms of contacts, we look at the importance and frequency of informal contacts with various actors.

The type of cooperation that emerges depends mostly on the goals or the stake that actors have in the issue and on the nature of the issue within the EU system of governance. A Presidency

⁴ Details on personnel can be found in the Slovenian Government's report on the Presidency, adopted on 3 July 2008 (available at http://www.svez.gov.si/fileadmin/svez.gov.si/pageuploads/docs/predsedovanje_eu/03-07_Porocilo_predsedovanje2008-6_SPREJETO_NA_VLADI.pdf), pp. 115-116).

conducts its tasks as a manager of the Council business, external representative of the EU, liaison between the institutions, broker and initiator (*cf.* Wallace & Edwards, 1976; Kietz & Perthes, 2007). The role the Presidency assumes in conducting these tasks can vary from simply the organiser (or bureaucrat), to mediator (or broker), leader and bargainer (national representative) (*cf.* Elgström, 2003; Schout & Vanhoonacker, 2006; also Tallberg, 2004, specifically on the latter, as amplifier or silencer of national interests). Two factors influence the nature of the cooperation: i) the specific role the Presidency undertakes (which varies from one issue to another), and ii) the objectives of other stakeholders. In cases where the Presidency wants to push for its own goals, it will cooperate less or in a less satisfactory manner (from the point of view of Presidency actors) with the actors who oppose the Presidency's views. The Presidency-organiser will cooperate very well with most of the actors and work best with the ones with the greatest say in the decision-making process. In cases when the Presidency acts as a broker, a small state (and a first time-ever) Presidency is more likely to rely on the expertise provided by the Council Secretariat in terms of procedural advice, information on positions and suggestions on tactical steps in the negotiations. In situations when the Presidency plays a leading role, it will cooperate best with its closest allies, depending on the issue at hand. (*cf.* Beach, 2004; Elgström, 2003).

The pillar structure, in combination with the stakes or goals of the actors, is the other factor that influences the nature of cooperation with other actors. In policy fields with greater competence at the EU level, the expertise on the subject at hand lies inside the Commission. Knowledge on procedural and tactical questions, on the other hand, is vested within the Council Secretariat. Both the Council Secretariat and the Commission are deeply familiar with national positions on the issues. The difference however, is that the Council Secretariat is in the service of the Presidency and thus provides the Presidency with information, while the Commission is an independent stakeholder and uses this knowledge in pursuit of its goals. In second pillar issues, however, the Council Secretariat is more likely to have a stronger position on the issues and will therefore to a lesser extent serve as a (satisfactory – in the eyes of the Presidency actors) source of help on tactical questions. The third pillar's governance characteristics suggest the more balanced role of the Commission and the Council Secretariat on cooperation regarding information on the problem and the positions of various stakeholders.

Slovenia is a small country, the first from the 2004/2007 enlargement round to run the Presidency of the Council of the EU. Both its own ambitions and external expectations for its Presidency were generally fairly low. It was expected that it would prevalingly choose to act in the role of the organiser, taking some leadership role on the issue of the Western Balkans, not completely detached from pursuing its own national interests, while Slovenia's government pledged to work towards bringing up solutions through reaching compromises, thus working in the mediating or brokerage role.⁵

In order to cover the wide variety of Presidency roles and the differences in governance across the pillars, the analysis is broken down into a selection of representative issue areas: i) foreign

⁵ On the expectations of the Slovenian Presidency in the international press, see e.g. *The Economist*, "Charlemagne: A Balkan Fable", 6 December 2007; by the expert community in Lang & Maršič (2007). Slovenia's self-view can best be seen in the remarks of Prime Minister Janez Janša in his address to the European Parliament on 16 January 2008: "Our Presidency may not be on such a large scale as the French, or as high-profile as the German one, and our civil servants may not have such an excellent and long-standing tradition as the British. We might make some mistakes, express something too directly or perhaps even naively. But we promise to work responsibly and devote ourselves to real issues" (full speech available at http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/Speeches_Interviews/January/0116PVvEP.html).

policy, ii) justice and home affairs, iii) common agricultural policy, iv) innovation and information society and v) climate and energy.

The first three issues in the most general sense fall under the three distinctive pillars, while the fourth and the fifth are characterised by the specific role of the Slovenian Presidency. The issues of innovation and information society fall within the scope of the Lisbon Strategy. The launch of the third cycle of the renewed Lisbon Strategy was among the top five priorities of the Slovenian Presidency as also was the advancement of the climate-energy package.⁶ On the latter, Slovenia actively played the role of the broker in order to reach an agreement on the climate-energy issue at the March European Summit as well as to secure political agreement in the Council on the 'unbundling' issue before the end of its term in office. With the Commission and some of the larger member states, notably France and Germany, on the opposing pole concerning the unbundling issue and in relation to the Commission's Communication "20 20 by 2020: Europe's climate change opportunity",⁷ the handling of the dossiers demanded a more active brokering role.

In relation to the innovation and the information society, Slovenia tried to exert political leadership by placing these areas at the helm of the third cycle of the Lisbon strategy. The Commission advocated an emphasis on the human dimension and labour markets and there were loud voices calling from the European Parliament to strengthen the social and employment priority.⁸ The Slovenian Presidency, however, put investment in knowledge and innovation at the forefront of its 'Lisbon strategy priority' and pushed hard to reverse the order of the three 'Lisbon baskets' (putting innovation first) and to include the 'fifth freedom' of knowledge in the Presidency Conclusions of the March 2008 European Council.⁹ During its term in office, it continued to work actively on the dossier and launched the 'Ljubljana Process' of enhanced governance within the framework of the European Research Area.

In the field of agricultural policy and fisheries, Slovenia adopted the organising role. It conscientiously undertook the Health Check of the Common Agricultural Policy and it engaged equally seriously with the issue of milk quotas. Slovenia had a strong national stake in the reform of the wine sector, but since the political compromise on the issue was reached in the

⁶ The Slovenian Presidency set itself five priorities: i) coordination of the ratification process of the Lisbon Treaty, ii) launch of the third cycle of the renewed Lisbon strategy, iii) advancing the climate-energy package further by seeking an agreement on further liberalisation of the internal market for gas and electricity, iv) intercultural dialogue and v) the super priority: bringing the countries of the Western Balkans one step closer to the EU.

⁷ COM(2008) 30 final, 23 January 2008; in response to the 2007 March European Council's call for a report on the matter on 23 January and the March European Council that was scheduled to debate the issue.

⁸ See "Keeping up the pace of change", Commission's December 2007 Strategic Report; COM (2007) 803 final, Brussels, 11 December 2007 and the debate in the European Parliament after the Presidency presented the programme (see Post-briefing Item: Slovenia takes over EU presidency: prime minister addresses European Parliament, 21 January 2008, available at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+IM-PRESS+20080111BRI18238+ITEM-002-EN+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>).

⁹ The free circulation of knowledge as an idea was introduced in the Green Paper: "The European Research Area: new perspectives (COM(2007) 161 final, 4 April 2007), but was not yet labelled the 'fifth freedom'.

Council in December 2007, Slovenia was entrusted with its implementation, thus again taking up the organising role.¹⁰

The roles the Slovenian Presidency played in other areas are not that clear cut, nor is the placement of these areas in either the second or the third pillar. Foreign policy falls predominantly, but not exclusively, in the second pillar; justice and home affairs cut across all three pillars. The ‘super-priority’ of Slovenia’s Presidency – bringing the countries of the Western Balkans one step closer to the EU – falls mostly in the foreign policy area, but also under justice and home affairs. In case of the Western Balkans, Slovenia exercised a bargaining role (*cf.* Kajnč, 2008b). In securing the negotiating mandate for the Commission for the new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the Russian Federation, Slovenia took up the combined role of broker and leader (Kajnč, 2008a), but on all other foreign policy issues under its mandate, it prevalingly acted as organiser.

The Slovenian Presidency took on numerous issues falling under justice and home affairs and acted in various roles. On achieving the visa liberalisation roadmaps for the countries of the Western Balkans, its role bordered on that of a bargainer, on SIS II it took up the leadership role, in visa facilitation procedures it acted as broker and on other issues (e.g. asylum, readmission) it adopted an organising role. This issue thus falls under all pillars and stretches over all four roles (*cf.* Kajnč, 2008a; 2008b; 2009).

The importance of informal contacts in diplomacy and even more so in ‘European diplomacy’ or in Brussels specifically is undisputed. The second part of this analysis looks in detail at the value placed on informal contacts and effect the various roles taken by the Presidency might have on the value as well as at the frequency of contacts with different actors.

1.3 Cooperation with whom?

The European Commission and the Council Secretariat are the most visible actors. The Commission is an independent actor, acknowledged as working to the best of the ‘European’ interest. The Council Secretariat is supposed to be an impartial body in the service of the rotating Presidencies, but its impartiality is often questioned (Beach, 2004). It has been shown that its own role has strengthened in the years in the shaping of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and especially since the post of the High Representative for the CFSP has been created with the Amsterdam Treaty. Its positions are also more visible on the CFSP issues (Dijkstra, 2008). The Presidency is responsible for the Council’s relations with the Commission and the European Parliament. The European Parliament is another stakeholder, whose role has largely increased in issues where the co-decision procedure applies, but which still struggles for a say in matters of foreign policy.

The member states are the most important stakeholders and any Presidency’s success depends on how it will bring about a compromise among them. The nature of relations a EU Presidency has with them depends largely on i) the issue at hand, ii) member states’ own interests and iii) the objective and strategy of the Presidency. There are various channels the Presidency can use to cooperate with the member states. The most obvious one is in Brussels, between the diplomats from the member states’ Permanent Representations. Outside Brussels, there are three main channels: visits of member states’ diplomats to the capital of the Presidency, networks of diplomatic and consular representations and the seconded personnel at the ministries. In the preparation of the Presidency and during its term in office the Presidency’s capital city is a very likely destination for many member states’ diplomats and experts, who approach the Presidency

¹⁰ Interview, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Ljubljana, 3 June 2008; see also reports on the Presidency by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (available at http://www.mkgp.gov.si/si/delovna_podrocja/predsedovanje_eu).

in order to influence it to work towards the given stakeholder's most desirable outcome on specific issue(s). Furthermore, the secondment in the Presidency ministries increases in time prior to the Presidency – in Slovenia's Government there were altogether 34 seconded personnel from the member states, from the European Commission and the Council Secretariat, 29 in Ljubljana (16 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), four at the Permanent Representation and one at Slovenia's Mission to the United Nations in New York. With the exceptions of Estonia, Malta and Luxembourg, all other member states have residential embassies in Ljubljana. The analysis below focuses also on the cooperation on information-sharing on the substantive issues and on the national positions, as it specifically looks at the use of seconded personnel and the diplomatic and consular representations of the member states (and third states) by the Slovenian Presidency actors. The paper also looks at cooperation achieved via diplomatic and consular representations of third states and at international organisations.

2. Cooperation between Slovenian Presidency actors and 'European' actors

2.1 Frequency of information on substance and positions

The general overview of the frequency of substantive information received from various actors shows that the Council Secretariat, Permanent Representation and the Commission were the most frequent source of this information. The percentages also show that those based at the Permanent Representation profited most from the information by the Council Secretariat and the Commission. It is also evident that the Council Secretariat is clearly more often a source of information on foreign policy issues than the Commission.

The low frequency of contacts with the European Parliament can partly be attributed to centrally run and specifically designated personnel both in Ljubljana and at the Permanent Representation, who acted as liaisons between the Presidency and the European Parliament. Despite this, the differences in the frequency of contacts between the Permanent Representation and those who worked specifically on the foreign policy issues suggests that i) there were contacts outside of the few specially assigned people and ii) the European Parliament as a source of information on the (foreign policy) issue plays a minor role.

Table 1. Frequency of receiving substantive information on issues: European institutions (% of total responses)

	Never	Occasionally	Regularly
Council Secretariat			
Full sample	15.8	18.4	65.8
PermRep	0	5.9	94.1
Capital	12.1	14.9	73.0
DiCo	30.0	36.7	33.3
Foreign policy	9.6	23.3	67.1
European Commission			
Full sample	12.0	32.0	56.0
PermRep	5.9	20.6	73.5
Capital	9.2	33.8	57.0
DiCo	22.6	38.7	38.7
Foreign policy	20.5	30.1	49.3
European Parliament			
Full sample	43.5	39.1	23.5
PermRep	23.5	52.9	23.5
Capital	42.4	36.7	20.9
DiCo	56.7	33.3	10.0
Foreign policy	47.9	39.4	12.7

Note: Numbers represent the percentages. The full sample is the total number answered on the question of the frequency of their contacts, irrespective of whether they answered on the question of their post or their policy field. The number varies between 260 and 275. For all other groups the numbers are fixed: Permanent Representation in Brussels (PermRep) = 35, Capital = 143; Diplomatic and Consular representations of the Republic of Slovenia (DiCo) = 31 and those who worked on foreign policy and external relations (foreign policy) = 73.

Table 2 shows the frequency with which information was received on substantive issues from Slovenia's public administration based in Ljubljana, the Permanent Representation and the diplomatic and consular representations. The Permanent Representation clearly stands out as the most forthcoming in offering information, but the data also reveal one significant closed circle: diplomatic and consular representations also during the Presidency to a far greater extent served as a source of information in the field of foreign policy and much less across the various European policies.

Table 2. Frequency of receiving substantive information: Slovenia's institutions

	Never	Occasionally	Regularly
National public administration			
Full sample	20.3	51.7	28.0
PermRep	20.0	42.9	37.1
Capital	21.0	55.1	23.9
DiCo	30.0	54.8	45.2
Foreign policy	15.3	48.6	36.1
Permanent Representation in Brussels			
Full sample	9.5	24.1	66.4
PermRep	0.0	14.7	85.3
Capital	5.6	27.5	66.9
DiCo	16.1	29.0	54.8
Foreign policy	11.1	25.0	63.9
Diplomatic and consular representations of Slovenia			
Full sample	41.3	34.7	24.0
PermRep	26.5	44.1	29.4
Capital	51.1	30.5	18.4
DiCo	0.0	58.1	41.9
Foreign policy	8.2	43.8	47.9

Similarly as above, the data for member states' and third states' diplomatic representatives as well as international organisations also show that these actors still, in line with tradition, approached, or were approached by, those working in foreign policy to a much greater extent than the average, which includes the whole range of policies dealt with in the EU. This is not surprising, just as it is not that member states' diplomatic representatives show the highest frequency of contacts for the purpose of exchanging (or delivering) information on the content of the problem. The data on seconded personnel reveal that they are far from being a general source of information on the substance of the issue, and even less so, on the position of other actors. Their number (34 all together) suggests they were in touch with the limited number of Slovenian personnel, working on a narrow or very specific issue, which might explain the stable percentage among those who received information from the seconded personnel regularly (see also Table 6 below).

Table 3. Frequency of receiving substantive information: Member states' channels, third states and other international organisations

	Never	Occasionally	Regularly
Seconded personnel			
Full sample	58.3	27.8	13.9
PermRep	77.4	9.7	12.9
Capital	55.5	31.4	13.1
DiCo	50.0	46.4	3.6
Foreign policy	55.7	31.4	12.9
Diplomatic and consular representations of member states			
Full sample	54.3	34.8	10.9
PermRep	64.7	26.5	8.8
Capital	57.9	34.3	7.9
DiCo	10.3	58.6	31.0
Foreign policy	28.2	52.1	19.7
Diplomatic and consular representations of third states			
Full sample	69.4	26.4	4.2
PermRep	62.5	31.3	6.3
Capital	73.6	23.6	2.9
DiCo	41.4	48.3	10.3
Foreign policy	53.5	38.0	8.5
Other international organisations			
Full sample	20.3	51.7	28.0
PermRep	20.0	42.9	37.1
Capital	21.0	55.1	23.9
DiCo	0.0	54.8	45.2
Foreign policy	19.2	60.3	20.5

Frequencies of information on the position of other actors do not differ much from the above frequencies of the information on the content of the problem in terms of importance of the specific actors. It is, however, notable that on average, frequencies of information on positions are lower all across the actors, with the exception of diplomatic and consular representations. The traditional role of diplomats in gathering information and reporting on positions is most visible in comparison with the lesser informative role on positions by other actors.

Table 4. Frequency of receiving information on the position of other actors on substantive issues: European institutions

	Never	Occasionally	Regularly
Council Secretariat			
Full sample	20.5	31.1	48.5
PermRep	2.9	28.6	68.6
Capital	18.7	28.1	53.2
DiCo	38.7	38.7	22.6
Foreign policy	18.1	34.7	47.2
European Commission			
Full sample	19.2	43.6	37.2
PermRep	14.3	40.0	45.7
Capital	19.7	43.7	36.6
DiCo	16.7	43.3	40.0
Foreign policy	29.2	36.1	34.7

European Parliament			
Full sample	56.9	30.4	12.7
PermRep	34.3	57.1	8.6
Capital	59.6	27.2	13.2
DiCo	63.3	20.0	16.7
Foreign policy	60.6	31.0	8.5

Even more revealing are the correlations between both types of information (on substance and on positions) and various actors. There are three clusters of significant¹¹ positive correlations between both. The first cluster forms strong correlations between the both types of information. The actors who provide one type of information also provide the other type of information. The strength of correlations vary slightly, with the strongest correlations among the traditional diplomatic actors from the diplomatic and consular representations (correlation for both types of information from the Slovenian diplomatic and consular representation is at 0.813), followed by the Permanent Representation (0.770), the Council Secretariat (0.758), the European Parliament (0.716), the Commission (0.646) and the Slovenian public administration (0.636). Another cluster showing a strong positive correlation is formed among the European institutions and the Slovenian Permanent Representation. Correlations in this cluster are weaker; the positive correlation, however, is strongest between obtaining information on the positions from both, the Commission and the Council Secretariat (0.495) and information on the problem from the Commission and information on the positions from the Council Secretariat (0.424). The third cluster is formed by the traditional diplomatic actors, Slovenian, member states' and third states' diplomatic representations, where correlations are even slightly stronger (between 0.3 and 0.6). Slovenian public administration, other than the Permanent Representation, regarding both types of information shows none (not significant) or very weak correlations (between 0.1 and 0.2) with European level institutions.

Table 5. Frequency of receiving information on the position of other actors: Slovenia's institutions

	Never	Occasionally	Regularly
Slovenia's public administration			
Full sample	32.8	49.4	17.7
PermRep	34.3	51.4	14.3
Capital	38.6	46.4	15.0
DiCo	6.5	54.8	38.7
Foreign policy	27.8	47.2	25.0
Permanent Representation in Brussels			
Full sample	16.7	29.3	54.0
PermRep	9.1	21.2	69.7
Capital	14.1	30.3	55.6
DiCo	20.7	34.5	44.8
Foreign policy	18.8	26.1	55.1
Diplomatic and consular representations of Slovenia			
Full sample	42.4	37.9	19.7
PermRep	25.7	62.9	1.4
Capital	50.4	31.2	18.4
DiCo	6.5	51.6	41.9
Foreign policy	11.0	47.9	41.1

¹¹ All correlations mentioned are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6. Frequency of receiving information on the position of other actors: Member states' channels, third states and other international organisations

	Never	Occasionally	Regularly
Seconded personnel			
Full sample	63.9	27.8	8.3
PermRep	75.0	21.9	3.1
Capital	60.7	31.1	8.1
DiCo	57.1	35.7	7.1
Foreign policy	61.8	29.4	8.8
Diplomatic and consular representations of member states			
Full sample	58.8	31.9	9.3
PermRep	64.7	29.4	5.9
Capital	64.7	29.5	5.8
DiCo	14.8	51.9	33.3
Foreign policy	41.2	42.6	16.2
Diplomatic and consular representations of third states			
Full sample	74.8	20.2	5.0
PermRep	82.1	13.6	4.3
Capital	46.4	42.9	10.7
DiCo	74.8	20.3	5.0
Foreign policy	55.1	36.2	8.7
Other international organisations			
Full sample	47.7	42.7	9.5
PermRep	38.2	55.9	5.9
Capital	52.9	39.3	7.9
DiCo	13.3	60.0	26.7
Foreign policy	38.0	45.1	16.9

2.2 Perceived success of cooperation

We analysed the Slovenian Presidency actors' rating of success of cooperation with the Council Secretariat, the Commission and national representatives of member states for the five 'what' aspects, across the abovementioned selected policies and specifically according to where they were based. Tables 7, 8 and 9 below show the mean of success rates on the scale from one to five, with five presenting the highest rate. We also calculated the correlations between the various 'what' and 'from whom'. The most significant results are presented at the end of this section.

As shown in Tables 7-9 below, the perceived success of cooperation of Slovenian Presidency actors with the Council Secretariat, the Commission as well as with the national representatives was generally very positive. On a scale from one to five, the average grade (mean) does not fall under three for any aspect of the analysis, whereas many average grades are significantly above four. The comparison between the institutions shows a generally highly positively rated cooperation with the Council Secretariat, significantly more positive than the cooperation with the Commission. Although the differences are small between the selected policy fields and between the Ljubljana-based, Brussels-based and those from the diplomatic and consular representations, they allow for comparisons and interpretations.

Table 7. *Perceived success of cooperation with Council Secretariat*

From whom \ Type of cooperation received	Agenda-setting	Substantive Information	Information on the position of other actors	Procedural Information	Advice on managing the dossier, strategy and negotiating techniques
Full sample	4.46	4.25	4.11	4.35	3.97
Foreign policy	4.85	4.23	4.02	4.33	3.92
JHA	4.74	4.41	4.21	4.41	4.18
Agriculture	4.21	4.13	4.08	4.25	4.04
Research	4.75	4.83	4.50	4.56	4.50
Energy&Environment	4.59	4.42	4.48	4.39	4.19
Capital / FP	4.52 / 4.43	4.32 / 4.20	4.18 / 3.97	4.39 / 4.33	4.01 / 3.83
PermRep / FP	4.65 / 4.80	4.38 / 4.53	4.21 / 4.20	4.61 / 4.40	4.26 / 4.20
DiCo / FP	4.30 / 4.71	3.36 / 3.75	3.40 / 3.86	3.60 / 4.14	3.30 / 3.71

Notes: For Tables 9-11, Full sample = 187 – 200; Foreign policy and external relations (Foreign policy) = 47 – 70; Justice and home affairs (JHA) = 31 – 41; Agriculture, fisheries and forestry (Agriculture) = 23 – 33; Research, innovation and information society (Research) = 12 – 17; Energy and environment = 37 – 51; Capital 107 – 113 (Capital / FP = 25); Permanent Representation (PermRep) = 31 – 34 (PermRep / FP = 12); Diplomatic and consular representations (DiCo) = 19 (DiCo / FP = 10)).

Table 7 on cooperation with the Council Secretariat shows that the highest perceived success was in those aspects where the Council Secretariat formally assists the Presidency: agenda-setting and providing procedural information. Information on the content of the problem and on the issues of other actors are not graded much lower, but already come very close to the perceived success in cooperation on these two aspects with the national representatives (with the exceptions of research, innovation and information society; and energy and environment; see Table 9). The difference between the various aspects of cooperation is biggest in the fields of justice and home affairs and of foreign policy, which is shown also when foreign policy actors are broken down according to their base.

On the other hand, the perceived success of cooperation with the Council Secretariat between capital- and Brussels-based Slovenian staff does not differ, with the exception of cooperation on running the dossier, strategy and negotiating techniques, where diplomats and experts from the Permanent Representations, especially those working on foreign policy issues, rated the cooperation with the Council Secretariat higher than their counterparts in Ljubljana.

Diplomatic and consular representatives are most critical towards cooperation with the Council Secretariat (and slightly less the Commission, see Tables 7 and 8), but those working in foreign policy rated the success of cooperation with the Council Secretariat on running the dossier, strategy and negotiations higher than average (but the number of respondents is very small, only 10).

Table 8. Perceived success of cooperation with Commission

From whom \ Type of cooperation received	Agenda-setting	Substantive information	Information on the position of other actors	Procedural information	Advice on managing the dossier, strategy and negotiating techniques
Full sample	3.99	4.03	3.56	3.46	3.37
Foreign policy	3.85	3.88	3.39	3.25	3.29
JHA	4.28	4.09	3.65	3.62	3.58
Agriculture	4.00	3.96	3.57	3.43	3.09
Research	3.93	4.36	3.86	3.64	3.29
Energy&Environment	4.12	4.09	3.79	3.35	3.55
Capital / FP	4.08 / 3.67	3.99 / 3.72	3.56 / 3.36	3.52 / 3.28	3.45 / 3.28
PermRep / FP	4.03 / 4.25	4.23 / 4.25	3.42 / 3.25	3.42 / 3.42	3.35 / 3.67
DiCo / FP	3.78 / 3.82	3.79 / 3.83	3.37 / 3.58	3.06 / 3.00	3.00 / 2.91

Cooperation with the Commission (Table 8) has been rated lower in general than with the Council Secretariat, but in line with its role, cooperation on agenda-setting, the substance of the issue and (slightly less) on the positions of other actors is rated higher than cooperation on the procedure. Similarly to the Council Secretariat, cooperation on running the dossier, strategy and negotiations is rated lowest. These figures, both for the Commission and the Council, confirm the formal roles the institutions have in relation to the Presidency. Analysis of differences between the policy fields reveals lowest rates for foreign policy, which is understandable taking into account the Commission's competences. This is best seen when comparing the success rates between the capital- and Brussels-based actors generally and in the foreign policy field. Capital-based foreign policy actors rated cooperation with the Commission lower than average on all aspects of cooperation, while the Brussels-based foreign policy actors do not differ from the average rate on cooperation calculated for the Brussels-based actors.

Cooperation with national representatives (Table 9) was generally rated slightly lower than with the Council Secretariat, but better than with the Commission. The highest rated aspects of cooperation are on the information on the substantive issue and on the positions. Cooperation on how to run the dossier, the use of strategy and the negotiating technique was rated slightly lower, but in comparison to differences between various aspects of cooperation in case of the Council Secretariat and the Commission, it was rated higher.

Across the policy fields, the differences are small, but they are not insignificant. In agriculture, where the Presidency took on the organising role, the cooperation with the Commission was rated lower than in research, innovation and information society, where the Presidency acted as leader, and in energy and environment, where the Presidency acted as broker (and where the Commission's position was opposite to that of some of the biggest member states). Cooperation on agriculture with the Council Secretariat was also lower than in other selected policy fields; but it was comparatively better with national representatives.

In justice and home affairs, a policy field that stretches across all the pillars and in which the Slovenian Presidency performed a variety of roles, cooperation was rated very high with all other actors (only cooperation in some aspects with the Commission in research, innovation and

information society and cooperation on agenda-setting in foreign policy with the Council Secretariat was rated higher).

Table 9. Perceived success of cooperation with national representatives of member states

From whom? \ Type of cooperation received	Agenda-setting	Substantive information	Information on the position of other actors	Procedural information	Advice on managing the dossier, strategy and negotiating techniques
Full sample	3.81	4.12	4.01	3.36	3.55
Foreign policy	3.93	4.21	4.02	3.30	3.60
JHA	4.10	4.28	4.09	3.63	3.71
Agriculture	3.83	4.33	4.08	3.42	3.67
Research	3.46	4.00	3.77	3.23	3.23
Energy&Environment	3.92	4.31	4.03	3.49	3.65
Capital / FP	3.77 / 3.90	4.11 / 4.23	3.98 / 4.00	3.23 / 3.00	3.50 / 3.58
PermRep / FP	3.74 / 3.69	4.23 / 4.23	4.10 / 4.15	3.45 / 3.46	3.52 / 3.38
DiCo / FP	4.14 / 4.21	4.10 / 4.14	3.86 / 3.93	3.70 / 3.85	3.71 / 3.86

In the field of research, innovation and information society, where the Presidency was pursuing the leadership role, the average success attributed to cooperation with the Council Secretariat is highest for all five aspects and in relation to the Commission it is highest in case of the substantive information (suggesting that the nationality of top Commission officials should not be underestimated),¹² but lower on other aspects, which is understandable when taking into account that the Presidency's views were not in line with the solutions defended by the Commission (and suggesting that the nationality of top Commission officials should not be overestimated). Cooperation with national representatives, on the other hand, was rated significantly lower.

In energy and environment Slovenia acted as broker. The analysis shows very high rates of cooperation with all actors in all aspects, especially on managing the dossier, strategy and negotiating techniques.

Correlations between the type of cooperation and 'from whom' reveal the strongest positive and statistically significant correlations¹³ between various aspects of cooperation with one actor. The strongest are correlations between the various aspects of cooperation with the Council Secretariat (0.624 – 0.788; with the strongest correlation between the information on the content of the issue and the positions of other actors), followed by the medium strong correlations on cooperation with the Commission (0.407 – 0.690; the strongest being the correlation between information on procedure and information on how to run the dossier), and a more widely spread weak to strong positive correlation of cooperation with the national representatives (0.442 – 0.765; again with the strongest correlation between information on procedure and information on how to run the dossier).

¹² The Commissioner responsible for the policy field, Janez Potočnik, is Slovenian.

¹³ All correlations mentioned are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Across the three actors (the Commission, the Council Secretariat and national representatives) the correlations are statistically significant and stronger (but much weaker than within each actor, ranging between 0.2 and 0.4) between the Commission and the Council Secretariat. With respect to the various types of cooperation, the strongest correlations are for cooperation on procedural question and on agenda-setting (0.404 and 0.402 respectively, between the Commission and national representatives). There are statistically significant but weak correlations between the information on the position of various actors and all aspects of cooperation with national representatives. In the case of the Council Secretariat and national representatives, there are weak statistically significant correlations between the information on the positions of other actors from both, the Council Secretariat and national representatives, and between cooperation with both actors on managing the dossier.

2.3 Importance and frequency of informal contacts

Another point examined was the importance of informal personal or telephone contacts for the success of the work undertaken. Table 10 below indicates the high importance of informal contacts, with expected differences with respect to the base of respondents. Diplomatic and consular actors are used to informal contacts and are likely to attach more importance to them than other actors in the national administration. They can therefore serve as a benchmark. The capital-based actors deemed the informal contacts almost as important as the traditional diplomats, while those based at the Permanent Representation exceeded this by almost ten percentage points.

Table 10. The importance of informal contacts for accomplishing the work, based on affiliation of respondent

	Full sample (N = 223)	Capital-based (N = 140)	PermRep-based (N = 34)	DiCo-based (N = 31)
Affirmative	78.5	77.9	91.2	80.6
Negative	21.5	22.1	8.8	19.4

It is more striking to look at the breakdown of the importance of contacts according to selected policy fields (Table 11). What sticks out is the relative lower importance of the informal contacts deemed by those who worked in research, innovation and information society and those who worked on energy and environmental issues. In these two fields, Slovenia pursued the roles of leader and broker respectively, meaning it was more engaged and placed more weight on achieving specific goals. The lower importance can be explained by three factors: i) in these fields there was strong political will and support, which means that more senior actors engaged in formal conversations; ii) these actors are relatively underrepresented in the study (only one minister or state secretary filled-in the questionnaire); and iii) due to the importance attached to obtaining results on these issues, they might have been off limits to actors lower in the administration's hierarchy and with that to the informal contacts established among them. The opposite interpretations are possible for the agricultural, fisheries and forestry policy, where Slovenia assumed the role of organiser: i) lower-level actors were engaged to a greater extent, ii) the political support was smaller and iii) the dossier still had to be managed, and those responsible for it simply relied more on their own informal contacts in the absence of engagement from higher-profile officials.

Table 11. The importance of informal contacts for accomplishing the work, based on selected policy fields

	Foreign policy (N = 72)	JHA (N = 44)	Agriculture (N = 35)	Research (N = 17)	Energy & environment (N = 52)
Affirmative	84.7	84.1	80	70.6	71.7
Negative	15.3	15.9	20	29.4	28.8

Table 12 reveals the frequency of contacts with various actors in respect to the affiliation of the Slovenian Presidency actors. Similarities between the frequency of contacts of traditional diplomatic and consular staff and staff based at the Permanent Representation with the Slovenian administration in Ljubljana and with national representatives of other member states suggest a traditional pattern of informal diplomatic relations also in respect to the Permanent Representation. The higher level of contacts in Brussels can be attributed to the saturation of actors and frequency of meetings in Brussels.

The relatively high frequency of diplomatic and consular representatives' interactions with the Commission's staff holds for their respective capitals and suggests cooperation with the Commission's representation or delegation there (the Council Secretariat's staff obviously not being present or not regularly present, therefore, lower frequencies in this case), but in comparison to the frequency of contacts with national representatives, thus their traditional diplomatic counterparts, the contacts with the Commission's staff are notably less frequent.

The Permanent Representation's staff naturally had more contacts with all other European-level actors and of course most often with the Council Secretariat's staff. With respect to the staff in the capital, it is interesting to note that informal contacts with all other actors with the exception of members or staff from the European Parliament match or even exceed (in case of contacts with the Council Secretariat's staff) the frequency of contacts inside the Slovenian administration.

The low frequency of contacts with the members and the staff of the European Parliament is in line with above presented results on frequency and content of cooperation, confirming the lesser role of the European Parliament, but also a more concentrated form of cooperating with it by the Slovenian Presidency.

Table 12. Frequency of informal contacts

Actor	Affiliation	Very seldom	Seldom	Often	Very often
Slovenian public administration actors	Capital (143)	7.7	18.3	43.7	30.3
	PermRep (35)	2.9	8.6	28.6	60.0
	DiCo (30)	0.0	10.0	33.3	56.7
Council Secretariat's staff	Capital (141)	14.2	12.1	32.6	41.1
	PermRep (35)	0.0	0.0	8.6	91.4
	DiCo (28)	39.3	25.0	14.3	21.4
Commission's staff	Capital (143)	9.9	22.7	39.0	28.4
	PermRep (35)	2.9	11.4	14.3	71.4
	DiCo (30)	23.3	6.7	40.0	30.0
National representatives of the member states	Capital (141)	5.0	16.3	51.1	27.7
	PermRep (35)	0.0	0.0	17.1	82.9
	DiCo (30)	0.0	0.0	30.0	70.0
MEPs or staff of the EP	Capital (139)	56.8	28.8	8.6	5.8
	PermRep (35)	25.7	28.6	37.1	8.6
	DiCo (27)	85.2	14.8	0.0	0.0

Note: The figures in brackets show the number of responses; the results are given in percentages.

3. Conclusions

This paper analyses the results of a survey taken of the principal actors in the Slovenian Presidency of the EU Council of their cooperation with other actors in the European political arena: the Council Secretariat, the European Commission and national representatives of member states, including diplomatic actors of third states. This paper's findings are constrained by its self-evaluative character, the under-representation of the highest level of Slovenian decision-makers and its limited results concerning the differences in the three pillars.

Nevertheless, the analysis allows for some significant conclusions. First, the Permanent Representation was the most important actor in the Slovenian Presidency in terms of cooperation and contacts, both formal and informal, with European institutions and member states as well as with the Presidency's own administration in the capital. It was the Presidency's eyes and ears, across the entire range of policies. The rest of the public administration in the capital had far less contact with the European-level actors, although that contact was not significantly less satisfactory.

Second, during Slovenia's Presidency the Council Secretariat and the Commission performed their long-established roles in relation to the Presidency. The Council Secretariat's staff was the Presidency's best ally. It guided it through the procedures and it provided most often the most useful information. It performed these formal roles to a much greater satisfaction than it did in providing guidance on running the dossier and negotiations. A lower level of perceived success with the Council Secretariat in the field of cooperation does not allow us to conclude whether or not the Council Secretariat was not sufficiently helpful or that its assistance was not always welcome, but in any case it suggests that the Presidency needed diplomatic staff with traditional diplomatic competences. Though to a slightly lesser extent and more susceptible to its own interests, this also held for cooperation with the Commission. Despite the more centrally run relations with the European Parliament the low frequencies and low rated cooperation with it, suggest that the European Parliament is still of lesser importance in running a EU Presidency.

Third, the Presidency is foremost the Presidency of the Council of the EU, where member states work closely together. Generally during the Slovenian Presidency it was a very frequent and positively rated cooperation, especially on information but also in terms of advice on negotiations with the member states. Cooperation was stable across all the policies, with the exception of research, innovation and information society – the field where Slovenia tried to act as a leader. Seconded personnel were shown to be confined to a very limited circle and not really fully appreciated. The question arises whether the seconded personnel could be used better to the advantage of the Presidency, if the administration were more used to having access to such additional expertise around, which cannot be said to be the case in Slovenia's public administration.

Fourth, traditional diplomats must not be underestimated. The Presidency does not only run in Brussels and in the capital of the member state in the Presidency seat, but also in member states' and third states' capitals. Traditional diplomats are among the most reliable source of information in general and on the positions of other actors in particular. They are traditionally more involved in the strict foreign policy issues. The analysis suggests that their range of work should be expanded to cover European policy-making across all policies.

Last, the Presidency works best when it is highly engaged. The organising Presidency will be technical and (perceived) cooperation with other actors less successful. The leader can experience difficulties, but the brokering Presidency can count on help, especially with running the dossier and in negotiations.

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Annex 1. Methodology

The analysis is based on the results of an electronic survey conducted among Slovenia's public servants directly involved in substantive issues as experts or diplomats, in the conduct of the country's Presidency in the first six months of 2008. The survey, comprising 40 closed-type questions, was distributed on 9 July 2008 to 667 individuals through the email distribution list of the Presidency sub-group for human resources, the email list of expert and diplomatic personnel at the Permanent Representation and directly to the email addresses of the ambassadors of the Republic of Slovenia. The electronic questionnaire remained accessible until 4 September 2008.

The survey represents a self-evaluation of the actors directly involved in the activity that is being evaluated. Self-evaluation is a necessary element of any review of the activity, albeit it is only one of the techniques of any evaluation. This poses limits to the objectivity of the answers and thus to interpretation of the results presented in this paper. It needs to be pointed out that the survey was conducted independently of Slovenia's Government, it was fully anonymous and it was conducted shortly after the end of the evaluated activity, thus avoiding distortions by time distance – these elements speak in favour of the interpretative value of the results. The response rate (407 submitted questionnaires, out of these 209 complete), as well as the distribution of answers in terms of post-variation of the public servants and the diplomats (capital- and Brussels-based, also in terms of hierarchy, with the exception of the highest political decision-makers, who are underrepresented in the survey; see Table A.1) and the policy fields they were engaged in (see Table A.2) also speak in favour of the representative nature of the results and thus allow for their interpretation.

Table A.1 Distribution of respondents according to the hierarchy in the public service, separating the diplomats based at the Permanent Representation in Brussels and the ambassadors

Post	Number	Percentage of respondents
Ministers, State Secretaries	1	0.5
Heads of Division	38	18.2
Heads of Unit	36	17.2
<i>Diplomats at the Permanent Representation in Brussels</i>	35	16.7
<i>Ambassadors</i>	31	14.8
Desk officers	46	22.0
Policy analyst, expert	22	10.5
Total	209	100.0

With regard to the policy fields it needs to be noted that respondents could mark several fields. Although there are differences in the absolute numbers, they roughly represent the relative share of public servants working in the specific fields during the Presidency.

For the purpose of analysis in this paper, the respondents were re-grouped into three categories: capital-based, Brussels-based and embassy-based. As explained above, only some of the policy fields are covered in the analysis (indicated in italics in Table A.2), with environment and energy grouped together into a single variable. The base of respondents and the policy fields represent the independent variables.

The dependent variables are the frequency of cooperation with various actors on obtaining the information on substance of the problem and on the positions of various actors, the level of (perceived) success of cooperation with various actors in different aspects of cooperation and importance and frequency of informal contacts.

Table A.2 Representation across the policy fields

Policy field	Number	Percentage of respondents
<i>Foreign and security policy, external relations</i>	73	17.4
<i>Justice and home affairs (justice, freedom and security), fight against fraud</i>	44	10.5
<i>Agriculture, fisheries, forestry</i>	36	8.6
Development cooperation, humanitarian aid, human rights	33	7.9
<i>Environment</i>	29	6.9
Internal market, Competition, Consumer protection, enterprise	28	6.7
<i>Energy</i>	23	5.5
Economy and monetary affairs	21	5.0
Public health, Food safety	21	5.0
Enlargement	19	4.5
External trade, customs	17	4.1
<i>Research, innovation, information society</i>	17	4.1
Education, training, youth, employment and social affairs	16	4.0
Traffic, maritime issues	13	3.1
Culture, audiovisual, media	12	3.0
Institutional matters, budget, taxation	10	2.4
Regional policy	7	1.6
Total	419	100

The frequency of cooperation was checked specifically for obtaining substantive information and on the positions of other actors on the issue. The possible answers were: never, occasionally and regularly. We asked on frequency of cooperation with the following actors: Council Secretariat, Commission, European Parliament, Slovenia's public administration (with the exception of Permanent Representation in Brussels), Permanent Representation in Brussels, seconded personnel at the ministries, diplomatic and consular representations of the Republic of Slovenia, diplomatic and consular representations of member states of the EU, diplomatic and consular representations of third countries, other international organisations.

The question on the rating of success of cooperation in various aspects was measured on a scale from one to five, with five presenting the best rate of success. We asked on the cooperation in agenda setting, substantive information on the problem, information on positions of other actors, information on procedural question, cooperation in running of the dossier and on the use of strategy and negotiating tactics. We asked these questions specifically for: Commission, Council Secretariat and national representatives.

With regard to the importance and frequency of informal contacts, we asked whether informal contacts were crucial for the successful achievements and we specifically asked for the frequency of contacts with the following actors: Slovenia's public servants and diplomats, national representatives of member states, officials at the Council Secretariat, officials at the Commission, officials and members of the European Parliament and interest groups and non-governmental organisations (the latter not being included in the analysis in this paper). The possible answers were: very rare, rare, frequent and very frequent.

Due to the nature of the variables and the sample, the analysis is limited to descriptive statistics, frequencies, cross tabulation and means comparison as well as correlations. In each section of the analysis, the results for the entire sample are first presented and then the analysis is broken down with regard to the independent variables.



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With the conclusion of the Convention, CEPS and other participating institutes decided to keep the network in operation. EPIN has continued to follow the constitutional process in all its phases: 1) the intergovernmental conference of 2003-04, 2) the ratification process of the Constitutional Treaty, 3) the period of reflection and 4) the intergovernmental conference of 2007. Currently, EPIN follows: 5) the ratification process of the Lisbon Treaty and – should the treaty enter into force – 6) the implementation of the Treaty.

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