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DEPARTMENT OF EU INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY STUDIES

EU Diplomacy Paper

13 / 2017



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Abstract

Every three years the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU) hold a Summit of Heads of States and Governments to take stock of the progress made in the implementation of the Africa-EU Partnership. The 5th African Union-EU Summit will take place on 29-30 November 2017 in Abidjan. On this occasion, this paper aims to analyse the interplay between the EU Delegation (EUDEL) and the permanent missions of the EU member states to the African Union in Addis Ababa. To what extent has the EUDEL emerged as a post-Westphalian diplomatic actor that centralizes, complements or competes with the diplomatic activities of member states' permanent missions? I argue that the EUDEL and its member states have created an 'umbrella regional diplomacy', where member states embed their bilateral diplomatic relations in the overall European approach towards the AU. However, since it is up to the AU to grant access to its meetings, the interplay between the EUDEL and its member states' permanent missions is importantly shaped by the AU's preferences for its diplomatic counterpart(s).

Introduction: The EU Delegation in Addis Ababa as a diplomatic actor

On 29-30 November 2017, the 5th Summit of Heads of States and Governments from the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU) will take place in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. This is an important opportunity to deepen the reflection on the diplomatic relations that interlink both continents. Since the adoption of the *Joint Africa-EU Strategy* (JAES) in 2007,¹ AU-EU relations have become increasingly comprehensive and relevant to all stakeholders, including the EU, its member states, the AU and its respective member states.² The permanent diplomatic hub that connects both continents is the EU Delegation (EUDEL) to the African Union, based in Addis Ababa, the AU's headquarter. The EU Delegation to the AU was established in 2008 to ensure a permanent presence as well as to implement and to operationalize the JAES.³ Besides its political relevance, the analysis of the EUDEL to the AU touches upon a more profound question of European diplomacy⁴ – the role of EU Delegations as emerging diplomatic actors. Diplomatic actors are thereby defined as “internationally recognised representatives of internationally recognised entities”.⁵

The 2009 Treaty of Lisbon states the key legal provisions that have boosted the importance of EU Delegations. Art. 47 TEU introduces the legal personality of the Union.⁶ This is crucial for the EU's external representation in general as it gives a legitimate legal basis to the EU to be represented internationally. Before that, it was only the Community, but not the entire EU who benefited from a legal personality.⁷ Regarding the role of the EUDELs, Art. 221(1) TFEU stipulates that “Union delegations in third countries and at international organisations shall represent the Union”.⁸ Institutionally, this holistic representation of the Union is defined by Art. 221(2) TFEU

¹ Council of the European Union, *The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership: A Joint Africa-EU Strategy*, Lisbon, 9 December 2007.

² Delegation of the European Union to the African Union, *About the EU Delegation to the African Union*, Addis Ababa, 2017.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ In my empirical analysis, I refer to European diplomacy as a notion that embraces both EU diplomacy and EU member states' diplomacy.

⁵ C. Bjola and M. Kornprobst, “Towards Inclusive Diplomacy”, in C. Bjola and M. Kornprobst, *Understanding International Diplomacy: Theory, Practice and Ethics*, London, Routledge, 2013, p. 201.

⁶ European Union, “Consolidated Versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union of March 2010”, *Official Journal of the European Union*, C83, 30 March 2010, Art. 47 TEU.

⁷ K.V. Laatikainen, “The EU Delegation in New York: A Debut of High Political Drama”, in D. Spence and J. Batora (eds.), *The European External Action Service European Diplomacy Post-Westphalia*, Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, p. 196.

⁸ European Union, “Consolidated Versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union of March 2010”, *op.cit.*

stating that the EUDELs fall under the authority of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR),⁹ who is assisted by the European External Action Service (EEAS).¹⁰ Only in the “areas where the Commission exercises the powers conferred upon it by the Treaties, the Commission may, in accordance with Article 221(2) TFEU, also issue instructions to delegations”.¹¹

In light of the increased importance of the EUDELs, the question arises about the relationship between the EUDELs and the EU member states’ diplomatic missions.¹² This question is important because it puts the traditional Westphalian system of state diplomacy into perspective. Yet, the Treaties seem to provide an answer: Art. 32 TEU, Art. 35 TEU and Art. 221 (2) TFEU¹³ all stress that EUDELs shall cooperate with member states’ diplomatic and consular missions, in line with the EU’s general principle of sincere cooperation between the Union and its member states.¹⁴ Yet, from a state-centric perspective, diplomacy is regarded as “the dialogue between states” according to the definition of the former British diplomat Adam Watson.¹⁵ Consequently, it could be argued that national diplomatic missions are still the prevailing diplomatic actors, and that they rather marginalize EUDELs instead of cooperating with them. In contrast, Hamilton and Langhorne consider that the state becomes increasingly irrelevant as a diplomatic actor.¹⁶ They would presumably argue that EUDELs will develop as the new dominant European diplomatic actors, who could even replace member states’ diplomatic missions in the long term, even though this was not intended by the Treaties.

Thus, this paper examines to what extent the EUDEL has emerged as a diplomatic actor that centralizes, complements or competes with the diplomatic activities of member states’ permanent missions to the African Union. I argue that the

⁹ *Ibid.*, Art. 221 (2) TFEU.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Art. 27 (3) TEU.

¹¹ Council of the European Union, “Council Decision (2010/427/EU) of 26 July 2010 establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service”, *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 201/33, 26 July 2010, Brussels, p. 5.

¹² The notion of ‘diplomatic mission’ is used in this paper as the umbrella term for ‘permanent missions’ and ‘embassies’. However, these last two concepts differ from each other, because ‘permanent missions’ are attached to international and regional organisations, whereas embassies maintain bilateral relations with other states according to K.S. Rana, “Embassies, Permanent Missions and Special Missions”, in C.M. Constantinou, P. Kerr and P. Sharp (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Diplomacy*, London, Sage, 2016, p. 154.

¹³ European Union, “Consolidated Versions”, *op. cit.*, Art. 32 TEU, Art. 35 TEU, Art. 221 (2) TFEU.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Art. 4 TEU.

¹⁵ A. Watson, *Diplomacy: The Dialogue between States*, London, Routledge, 1991 (1982), quoted in G.A. Pigman, *Contemporary Diplomacy*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2010, p. 5.

¹⁶ K. Hamilton and R. Langhorne, *The Practice of Diplomacy: Its Evolution, Theory and Administration*, London, Routledge, 2010, 2nd edn., p. 229.

EU and its member states have developed an 'umbrella regional diplomacy'¹⁷ regarding the AU. This means that the EUDEL is covering all policy areas that have been defined for AU-EU relations, whereas the EU member states are free to complement its approach bilaterally. However, this main argument needs to be nuanced by two contradictory tendencies. On the one hand, there is a tendency towards more centralization at the level of the EUDEL, because the AU grants a more privileged access to AU meetings to the EUDEL than to most of the EU member states' permanent missions. Moreover, the EUDEL is capable to attend all these meetings because it has the necessary resources. This makes the EUDEL the central hub of information gathering on which especially smaller EU member states rely. Furthermore, the EUDEL is the core when it comes to issuing public statements on AU-EU relations. On the other hand, the bigger member states like France, Germany and the UK have the capacities to pursue extensively their bilateral relations with the AU. Especially in informal meetings with the AU, it is difficult to assess whether they act complementarily to the EUDEL or whether they try to extend their bilateral relations in competition to the EUDEL's relations with the AU. In the context of Brexit, the UK could attempt to become an even more competitive diplomatic actor.

The paper adds new insights to the research on EU diplomatic relations since the focus of research so far has mostly been on the EU's representation to third countries¹⁸ or to international organizations like the United Nations (UN)¹⁹ – where EU member states are members themselves, unlike in the case of the AU.

The next section sets out the broader context of AU-EU relations. It is followed by the conceptual framework which draws on Pigman's concepts of representation and communication²⁰ and a methodological approach that is based on both quantitative and qualitative indicators. The remainder of the paper will then present the findings before conclusions are drawn.

¹⁷ This wording is also used in D. Spence, "Taking Stock 50 Years of European Diplomacy", *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2009, p. 242.

¹⁸ See e.g. F. Austermann, *European Union Delegations in EU Foreign Policy: A Diplomatic Service of Different Speeds*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

¹⁹ See e.g. K.V. Laatikainen, "The EU Delegation in New York: A Debut of High Political Drama", in D. Spence and J. Batora (eds.), *The European External Action Service European Diplomacy Post-Westphalia*, Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp. 195-218.

²⁰ G.A. Pigman, *Contemporary Diplomacy*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2011, pp. 5-7.

The EU Delegation to the African Union as an important diplomatic hub

The *Joint Africa-EU Strategy* and its first action plan were adopted on the occasion of the second Africa-EU Summit in Lisbon in 2007.²¹ The joint strategy is meant to be the overarching long-term framework to structure the relations between Africa and the EU.²² It aims at putting Africa-EU relations on an equal footing by reinforcing a strong continent-to-continent partnership, a common approach to promote peace, democratic governance, development policies as well as effective multilateralism and a people-centred approach.²³ The JAES further states that these long-term principles and objectives should be implemented in four strategic areas, namely “peace and security, governance and human rights, trade and regional integration and further key development aspects (like the achievement of the MDGs [Millennium Development Goals] at that time)”.²⁴

To implement the cooperation between the AU and the EU, the JAES provides a complex institutional setting. At the core are the triennial Africa-EU Summits of the Heads of States and Governments.²⁵ While member states’ involvement in the Africa-EU relations is present, for instance throughout the Africa-EU Summits or during the EU Political and Security Committee-African Union Peace and Security Council (EU PSC-AU PSC) meetings, the AU member states are in general less engaged in the Africa-EU Partnership and, therefore, delegate the main responsibility to the AU Commission.²⁶ In comparison, EU member states are more engaged in the partnership, especially in the Council’s Working Group for Africa (COAFR).²⁷ However, this is a distinctive process that should not be confused with the subsequent diplomatic representation and communication of European policies in third parties’ capitals. Hence, this paper does not analyse the role of EU member states in Brussels regarding EU policy formulation, but addresses exclusively the question of diplomatic relations of the EU and its member states towards the AU.

Despite the wide range of actors involved in AU-EU relations, the JAES points out that the EUDEL remains indispensable for AU-EU relations to ensure effective interaction

²¹ J. Mangala, “Africa-EU Strategic Partnership: Historical Background, Institutional Architecture, and Theoretical Frameworks”, in J. Mangala (ed.), *Africa and the European Union: A Strategic Partnership*, Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 20.

²² Council of the European Union, “The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership”, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-12.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

²⁶ Mangala, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

between both organizations.²⁸ The first action plan further stated that the EUDEL should represent the EU “in all areas of competency and activity”.²⁹ The second action plan added that the EUDEL is essential “in ensuring effective EU coordination [...] among member states”.³⁰ Lastly, Jack Mangala concludes that the EUDEL to the AU provides added-value to the implementation and the monitoring of the JAES.³¹ Hence, in the sense of Art. 221 TFEU, the main role of the EUDEL to the AU is to be the permanent EU representative in Addis Ababa that is tasked with the daily implementation of the JAES and in so doing coordinates with EU member states’ permanent missions.

Framework of analysis: Conceptualizing the ‘Essence of Diplomacy’

In their comprehensive study on the “Essence of Diplomacy”, Jönsson and Hall identify representation and communication as the two core functions of diplomacy.³² As Pigman further notes, “[b]y thinking of the study of diplomacy as the study of representation and communication between global actors [...], we set ourselves a general roadmap of terrain to be covered”.³³ Thus, it seems to be particularly workable to approach diplomacy from the perspective of both core functions. There seems to be a common understanding among scholars that representation and communication are the two main activities of diplomacy. This is also illustrated by Pigman’s work “Contemporary Diplomacy”,³⁴ which is based on both functions and whose definitions outline the conceptual framework of this paper. Regarding the function of representation, Pigman notes that “[r]epresentation begins with the notion of the diplomatic actor itself, but asks how the actor represents itself to others with whom it wishes to establish and maintain a relationship or dialogue”.³⁵ Hence, the notion of representation is crucial in the context of this work, because it touches upon the question of *who* is representing the EU and its member states at the AU. However, an additional component is indispensable, namely communication. In this regard, Pigman explains that “[t]he idea of communication as a core diplomatic function

²⁸ Council of the European Union, “The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership”, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

²⁹ Council of the European Union, *First Action Plan (2008-2010) For the Implementation of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership*, Lisbon, December 2007, p. 28.

³⁰ Council of the European Union, *JAES Action Plan 2011-13: Cross-cutting issues*, Tripoli, November 2010, p. 10.

³¹ Mangala, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

³² C. Jönsson and M. Hall, *Essence of Diplomacy*, Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

³³ Pigman, *op.cit.*, p. 10.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

begins with this original understanding of diplomacy as the art of negotiation, but it recognizes that diplomacy comprises a much broader range of communications than those that would strictly be considered negotiations".³⁶ Thus, communication can be understood as a rather loose concept that embraces all different forms of exchange between diplomatic representatives. Regarding the differentiation between representation and communication, Pigman states that "communication, is distinct, although inseparable, from representation".³⁷ Thus, I interpret this distinction in the case of the EU and its member states at the AU as follows: representation refers concretely to the patterns that organize the external representation of EU member states' permanent missions and of the EUDEL to the AU. Communication then analyses *how*, via which channels of interaction, this representation is taking place. While representation and communication can be separated in theory, they are both so strongly intertwined in practice that it would not make sense to analyse them strictly as two distinct components in the empirical study.

Pigman's definitions of representation and communication are a useful starting point to conceptualize the empirical findings, but they remain two vast concepts that need therefore to be operationalized by a concrete methodological framework.³⁸ Thus, to assess the interplay between the EUDEL to the AU and the member states' permanent missions, the paper analyses to what extent EU and EU member states' diplomatic relations with the AU are centralized, complementary or competitive. According to Austermann, who studied the EU's diplomatic representation in 162 third countries, centralization "refers to the formally assigned and informally obtained channelling of diplomatic activity in EU matters through [...] the Union Delegations, in the capital cities of non-EU countries".³⁹ Thus, centralization means that the EUDEL is the main channel of EU and EU member states' diplomatic activities towards the AU. From this level of measurement, I derive two further definitions. Complementarity means, in my understanding, that the EU's and the EU member states' diplomatic activities are coordinated. Thus, the EUDEL and EU member states' permanent missions to the AU are representing their entities and communicate with the AU in a coherent manner, but the EUDEL is not the sole channel of diplomatic activity anymore. Competition as the opposite of centralization indicates that EU member states try to

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

³⁸ E. Reussner, *The Rise of an Emerging Diplomatic Actor? Assessing the Role of the EU Delegation to the African Union*, Master's thesis, Bruges, College of Europe, 2017, pp. 27-33.

³⁹ Austermann, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

distinguish their diplomatic relations with the AU from the EU's relations with the AU, by pursuing bilateral diplomatic activities that contradict the overall EU approach. In this case, EU member states try to avoid that diplomatic activities are mainly channelled throughout the EUDEL, instead they seek to keep them under their proper control.

According to these three levels of measurement, I will first conduct a quantitative study. I base this study on Austermann's comprehensive research design, which she calls the "EU Diplomacy Centralization Index" (EU-DCI).⁴⁰ She considers this index as "a tool to measure the impact of EU diplomacy in the world in a comprehensive and comparative fashion".⁴¹ While her analytical framework is rather broad and focuses on centralization of European diplomacy in third countries and not at international organizations, it also incorporates two aspects measured by four indicators that can be applied to international organizations. A first aspect that is relevant for my empirical research is the "[i]nternal coordination of EU policy among EU Delegations and member state embassies via EU Delegations".⁴² The second aspect refers to the "[u]nified external representation of the EU towards third countries via the EU Delegations".⁴³

As set out in Tables 1 to 4 below, four indicators are used and adequately adapted for the purpose of this paper in form of a point system. The more points, the more centralized the Union's diplomacy.

Table 1: First indicator – The number of EU member states' diplomatic missions

Number of EU member states' diplomatic missions	Number of points awarded
0	3
1-5	2,5
6-10	2
11-15	1,5
16-20	1
21-26	0,5
27-28	0

Source: Author's compilation based on F. Austermann's EU-DCI.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

Thus, it is expected that the lower the number of EU member states' diplomatic missions in a given country, the higher the centralization of EU diplomacy, because coordination is more effective and the EUDEL plays a more important role.⁴⁵

Table 2: Second indicator – The number of EU staff per EUDEL

Number of EU staff per EUDEL	Number of points awarded
12+	3
9-12	2
5-8	1
0-4	0

Source: Author's compilation based on F. Austermann's EU-DCI.⁴⁶

Hence, the more personnel an EUDEL possesses, the more it is expected to have the capacities to centralize EU diplomacy.⁴⁷

Table 3: Third indicator – Seniority of the Head of Delegation (HoD)

Seniority of the Head of Delegation according to the administrator function group (AD)	Number of points awarded
AD level of 15 or 16	2
AD level of 12, 13 or 14	1
AD level of 11 or less	0

Source: Author's compilation based on F. Austermann's EU-DCI.⁴⁸

The seniority of the Head of Delegation is analysed according to his/her administrator function group. In total, there are twelve different levels from five to sixteen, whereas the latter represents the most senior level. Austermann argues that the higher the seniority of the HoD, the more he/she is capable of coordinating between the EUDEL and the EU member states' diplomatic missions.⁴⁹

Table 4: Fourth indicator – Professional career of the Head of Delegation

Professional career of the Head of Delegation	Number of points awarded
EU official	1
EU member state diplomat	0

Source: Author's compilation based on F. Austermann's EU-DCI.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

Austermann argues, that a HoD who is an EU official is more effective in centralizing European diplomacy than a HoD who is a national diplomat, because the former acts more in line with unified Union interests.⁵¹

This quantitative study is a first useful approach to analyse the degree of centralization regarding the EU's and EU member states' diplomatic relations with the AU. However, I enhance and complement it with a qualitative study for the following three reasons: First, even though the rationale behind Austermann's indicators is justified by the outcome of a substantive number of case studies, her indicators remain, nevertheless, hypothetical. For example, it is not definite that a potential high number of EU member states' permanent missions to the AU leads automatically to less effective coordination. Thus, the qualitative study is necessary to verify the quantitative outcomes. Second, Austermann's study focuses largely on internal coordination patterns, which are the basic requirement for a unified external representation. However, she differentiates less between the different actual forms of external representation, and thus of communication, that exist regarding a third party. Third, she measures the degree of centralization, but her research design does not assess the nature of European diplomacy in case centralization is rather weak. Hence, it cannot assess whether European diplomacy would still be complementary or competitive. Therefore, a qualitative study needs to complement the analysis. Consequently, I add three qualitative aspects to the methodological framework.

The first aspect of the qualitative study is the question who is the main diplomatic interlocutor to the AU. The more the activity of the interlocutor is channelled through the EUDEL, the more European diplomacy seems to be centralized. Furthermore, the qualitative approach can assess the complementary or competitive nature, in case the interlocutor activity is not only channelled through the EUDEL. I understand the concept of diplomatic interlocutor to the AU, first of all, as the formal representative of the Union and of the EU member states to the AU. Since the EU and the EU member states have an observer status, they can both be invited by the AU.⁵² This role draws upon what the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (VCDR)⁵³ considers the core activity of diplomatic missions, namely representation to a third

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁵² Interview with official, German Embassy in Addis Ababa (per telephone), 5 April 2017.

⁵³ Done at Vienna on 18 April 1961, it is the most significant Convention for regulating diplomatic relations amongst states until today, according to J. Wouters and S. Duquet, "The EU and International Diplomatic Law: New Horizons?", *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2012, p. 32.

party.⁵⁴ Thus, I operationalize this activity in a narrow sense to assess the EU's and the EU member states' representation in *formal* AU meetings. On the contrary, the second role of the diplomatic interlocutor to the AU builds upon the VCDR's core activity of 'negotiation' with a third party.⁵⁵ To be more comprehensive, I enhance the meaning of 'negotiation', in the sense of Pigman, to the broader scope of diplomatic communication,⁵⁶ which involves to my understanding any form of dialogue between representatives of the EU and its EU member states on the one hand and representatives of the AU on the other hand. Thus, I operationalize the second and rather broad aspect of the diplomatic interlocutor to assess the activities of the EUDEL and the EU member states' permanent missions in *informal* meetings with the AU. Even though the VCDR concerns legally speaking only states, I apply nevertheless both functions to the EUDEL, given that the VCDR defines them as essential activities of diplomatic missions, and because Wouters and Duquet confirm that the EU tries to respect the VCDR to the "widest extent possible".⁵⁷ Moreover, the focus on *formal* and *informal* meetings allows for a more differentiated analysis of the diplomatic interlocutor's role.

The assessment of the diplomatic interlocutor leads to a second important dimension that needs to be analysed in the qualitative study: the gathering and sharing of information.⁵⁸ On the one hand, this implies identifying *who* gathers most of the information from the AU: the EUDEL or the EU member states' permanent missions. On the other hand, it questions *how* the gathered information is shared among the EUDEL and the EU member states' permanent missions. It is a valid indicator for the degree of centralization because the more the gathering and sharing of information happens via the EUDEL, the more likely is a high degree of centralization of European diplomacy. Furthermore, this aspect can be used to control the findings of the quantitative study since the sharing of information is a prerequisite for effective coordination. Thus, the degree of coordination can be verified by the degree of information sharing. Lastly, this dimension is chosen because van Schaik and Drieskens note that "the question is not only whether the EU member states will be willing to share sensitive and confidential information [...] but also whether they want to be

⁵⁴ United Nations, "Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations", Vienna, 18 April 1961 and entered into force 24 April 1964, Art. 3(1)(a), in United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 500, 2005.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Art. 3(1)(c).

⁵⁶ Pigman, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁵⁷ Wouters and Duquet, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁵⁸ The aspect of information gathering also relates to the third VCDR core activity of diplomatic missions that can be found in United Nations, "Vienna Convention", *op. cit.*, Art. 3(1)(d).

dependent upon information that is gathered and organized centrally".⁵⁹ In other words, a highly centralized degree of information gathering and sharing makes EU member states and the EUDEL more dependent on each other and thus fosters the centralization of European diplomacy.

While the aforementioned aspects present more classical elements of diplomacy, the third qualitative dimension touches upon the evolution of diplomacy, in particular the use of new technologies and the growing importance of public diplomacy. Nicolas Cull defines public diplomacy as "the process by which international actors seek to accomplish the goals of their foreign policy by engaging with foreign publics".⁶⁰ Cull identifies advocacy as an important feature of public diplomacy. In his understanding, advocacy is a diplomatic actor's attempt to steer its policy ideas and interests in a third country by means of communication activities.⁶¹ Here, advocacy is used as a qualitative indicator for public diplomacy. The most accessible way to measure advocacy is by counting the public statements issued by the EUDEL and by the EU member states' permanent missions regarding their relations with the AU. The more public statements are issued by the EUDEL, instead of the EU member states' permanent missions, the more it can be assumed that this diplomatic activity is channelled through and thus centralized by the EUDEL. In case public statements are also channelled through EU member states' permanent missions, the complementary or competitive nature of the published statements can be further assessed.

I analysed the websites of the EUDEL to the AU and of the EU member states' permanent missions to the AU between March and Mai 2017 and conducted ten semi-structured interviews with officials from the European Commission, from the EEAS (both at the headquarter in Brussels and per telephone with the EUDEL to the AU in Addis Ababa), with diplomats from EU member states (in headquarters and per telephone with the EU member states' permanent missions in Addis Ababa) and with one official from the AU in Addis Ababa per telephone.

⁵⁹ E. Drieskens and L. van Schaik, *The European External Action Service: Preparing for Success*, *Clingendael Papers*, no. 1, Clingendael Institute, The Hague, December 2010, p. 12.

⁶⁰ N.J. Cull, "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories", *Annals AAPSS*, no. 616, 2008, p. 86.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

A centralized European diplomacy vis-à-vis the AU? Findings of the case study

This section demonstrates the extent to which European diplomacy is centralized vis-à-vis the African Union. Therefore, it highlights the quantitative findings that are subsequently completed by the qualitative perspective.

The quantitative perspective

The quantitative analysis comes to a two-fold conclusion regarding the degree of centralization of European diplomacy towards the AU. On the one hand, the EUDEL seems to be sufficiently equipped and, thanks to the experience of the Heads of Delegation, capable to coordinate effectively with the EU member states' permanent mission to ensure a unified external representation. On the other hand, the vast presence of EU member states' permanent missions in Addis Ababa could hinder effective coordination.

Concretely, there are 21 permanent missions of EU member states in Addis Ababa.⁶² Their high number highlights the importance of the AU for EU member states. Thus, the case study scores only 0,5 points according to Austermann's first indicator of the EU-DCI. Consequently, this could indicate a low degree of centralization.

However, the second indicator that measures the EUDEL staff nuances this first result. According to the EUDEL website, the number of personnel in the EUDEL is 35 with approximately 20 staff members in the political and development cooperation sections.⁶³ This exceeds largely the minimum requirement for attributing the maximum amount of 3 points, given that the second indicator only requires an EUDEL to have at least 12 EU officials. Thus, the EUDEL is well-equipped with enough human resources to implement the different fields defined by the JAES and its action plans, which are crucial to ensure the functioning of AU-EU relations on a permanent basis. Furthermore, according to the underlying assumption of the second indicator, the EUDEL has enough staff to potentially be an effective coordinator between EU member states' permanent missions.

The third and fourth indicator address the role of the HoD who is equally important to ensure effective coordination and unified external representation. Regarding the HoD's administrative level of seniority, an interviewed EEAS official stated that both, the current ambassador Ranieri Sabatucci as well as his predecessor Gary Quince have the level AD 14 as well as the status of a Director, which is the

⁶² "EmbassyPages Ethiopia", *EMBASSYPAGES.COM*, 2017.

⁶³ Delegation of the European Union to the African Union, "About the EU Delegation", *op. cit.*

second highest one after the General-Director.⁶⁴ In Africa, the AD 14 level combined with the status of Director is the highest possible position for a HoD, which underlines the importance of the Head of the Delegation to the AU.⁶⁵ Thus, even though the third indicator only grants 1 point to the HoD, it stresses the seniority of the EUDEL ambassador, which is why the latter is expected to be respected and recognized by the ambassadors of the EU member states.

The last indicator examines the professional origins of the HoD. In this regard, the current and the previous HoD are both EU officials.⁶⁶ These HoDs to the AU are therefore expected to pursue the Union interests, which is an important prerequisite for an effective coordination and which is why 1 point is awarded to the last aspect of the quantitative analysis.

To sum up, the EUDEL to the AU scores 5,5 out of 9 points on Austermann's EU-DCI. This result illustrates a tendency towards a rather high degree of centralized European diplomacy. Yet, it also questions the pattern of coordinated and unified representation to some extent. The following qualitative study should contribute to clarifying the remaining ambiguities.

The qualitative perspective

This perspective presents the findings of the three qualitative aspects that were outlined in the conceptual framework: an analysis of the main diplomatic interlocutor to the AU, followed by the empirical results of the gathering and sharing of information, and finally public statements as a means to assess the centralization of advocacy.

The main diplomatic interlocutor to the AU

The EUDEL represents a significant channel of diplomatic activities to the AU, but EU member states are free to complement its role, especially in informal meetings. This pattern illustrates a trend towards an 'umbrella regional diplomacy' approach. However, Brexit could have a negative impact on this complementary umbrella approach, in case the UK is tempted to pursue its bilateral diplomatic relations with the AU more competitively, while still being a member state of the EU.

⁶⁴ Interview with official 1, EU Delegation to the AU, European External Action Service, Brussels, 26 March 2017.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ European External Action Service, *Press Release: High Representative Federica Mogherini announces senior appointments*, Brussels, Press Release, 20 July 2016; and European Parliament, *Curriculum Vitae Gary Quince*, Brussels, Meetdocs SEDE Committee 250913, 2014.

In formal meetings, the role of the interlocutor is more densely channelled through the EUEDEL than in informal meetings. A German diplomat points out that compared to EU member states, the EUEDEL benefits from a more privileged access to AU PSC meetings to issue official statements. This enables the EUEDEL to be the main European actor that presents the Union's and the EU member states' position towards the AU.⁶⁷ As the German diplomat notes, the observer status of the EU and its EU member states to the AU is rather weak in comparison to other international organizations, because it is up to the AU to decide whether and to whom they grant access to AU meetings.⁶⁸ The diplomat concludes that the AU tends to select its invitees according to the budget that the latter spend in support of the AU. In the area of peace and security, the EU, through the African Peace Facility, is the principal donor that finances the African Peace and Security Architecture, which also explains the AU's willingness to invite the EU to its open AU PSC meetings more often.⁶⁹ A Danish diplomat confirms this observation and adds that even though the EU budget for the AU support is built on EU member states' contributions, the AU does not differentiate among EU member states' donations and perceives only a unified EU budget support.⁷⁰ Hence, the AU's perception of a unified EU can explain why it only grants preferential access to the EU, but not to the EU member states.

These findings have two relevant implications for the study of European diplomacy towards the AU. First, the degree of high centralization is not the result of the approach of the EUEDEL and the EU member states' permanent missions towards more centralization. Rather, they are obliged by the AU to accept the EUEDEL as the central diplomatic interlocutor to ensure a minimum access to AU formal meetings. Second, it is interesting to note that the preferential access of the EU seems to be correlated with the budget that it allocates to the AU. Thus, there seems to be a direct link between important financial means and their potential to facilitate diplomatic access. Nevertheless, most of the interviewees think that this privileged access to the AU needs to be put into perspective because it is not guaranteed, and a lot of AU meetings are closed sessions, where neither the EU member states nor the EU are present.⁷¹ However, the German diplomat interviewed is more optimistic about the openness of the recently elected AU Commission because the new President of the

⁶⁷ Interview with official, German Embassy in Addis Ababa, *op. cit.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Interview with official, Danish Embassy in Addis Ababa, *op. cit.*

⁷¹ Interview with official, German Embassy in Addis Ababa, *op. cit.*

AU Commission, Moussa Faki, has already stressed the importance of the AU-EU Partnership.⁷² Yet, not all interviewees share this optimistic view regarding the future of AU-EU relations. One member state official is even uncertain whether the AU Commission wants to engage with the EUDEL as its main interlocutor, arguing that the future AU-EU relations will importantly depend on the initiatives taken by the newly elected AU Commission.⁷³ This statement underlines the vital dynamism that can shape the role of the main diplomatic interlocutor to the AU. However, for the time being, this role continues to be embodied by the EUDEL.

Despite the high degree of centralization, there is also evidence that the activity of the diplomatic interlocutor in formal meetings is partly channelled through EU member states' permanent missions. For example, the German official notes that France and the UK as permanent members of the UN Security Council are invited to AU PSC meetings, when UN missions in Africa are discussed.⁷⁴ In such a case, France and the UK coordinate their position with the EUDEL.⁷⁵ Furthermore, if there is a topic on the agenda of an AU PSC meeting which is particularly important for some EU member states, the Danish diplomat notes that the EUDEL and the interested EU member states' permanent missions can both be invited by the AU.⁷⁶ However, in this case the EUDEL representative would always be the first to present the EU's statement, and the EU member states' positions are at all times aligned to the EU's statement and further complement it.⁷⁷ This pattern explains how EU member states can pursue their bilateral diplomatic relations under the umbrella of AU-EU relations. The Danish diplomat even stresses that it is thanks to the EU's diplomatic weight that smaller EU member states are occasionally granted access to AU meetings by the AU Commission, which they would not get via bilateral channels.⁷⁸ This is an interesting observation because it shows that the EUDEL does not seek to impose itself as the main interlocutor, but actually supports the EU member states' permanent missions to become equally engaged with the AU in a complementary manner to the EU.

While the EUDEL remains nevertheless the main diplomatic interlocutor in formal AU meetings, the findings are less evident in informal meetings, where the strict rules of formal invitations to AU meetings do not apply. Hence, the German diplomat

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Interview with official, Belgian Foreign Ministry, Brussels, 14 March 2017.

⁷⁴ Interview with official, German Embassy in Addis Ababa, *op. cit.*

⁷⁵ Interview with official 1, EU Delegation to the AU, *op. cit.*

⁷⁶ Interview with official, Danish Embassy in Addis Ababa, *op. cit.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

concludes that it depends on the permanent missions' resources to increase its respective role as an interlocutor.⁷⁹ A European Commission official confirms that the EUDEL's comprehensive resources enable its staff to ensure a permanent and wide-ranging informal presence in the AU.⁸⁰ An EEAS official adds that the EUDEL's activities in informal meetings range from political dialogues and the provision of expertise to the supervision of EU projects.⁸¹ This also illustrates the large intertwinement of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and development issues in practice, despite their distinct legal nature. While the EUDEL proves to have largely sufficient resources to ensure permanent interaction with AU representatives, the German diplomat notes that this is not always the case for the EU member states' permanent missions.⁸² Germany, the UK and France are the only EU member states that have a separate department in their embassies that deals with the AU. In contrast, most of the small EU member states have their ambassadors accredited to Ethiopia and to the AU at the same time.⁸³ Officials in their embassies have to deal simultaneously with bilateral issues regarding Ethiopia and multilateral ones with the AU.⁸⁴ Despite these limited resources, the Danish official insists on the importance of Danish bilateral relations with the AU.⁸⁵ However, these bilateral relations only focus on specific areas – in the case of Denmark these are democratization and governance – while the EUDEL covers the entire portfolio of AU-EU diplomatic relations. But in these specific areas, Denmark is free to take strong initiatives, which follow the broad EU Foreign Affairs Council guidelines.⁸⁶ The Danish example underscores once again the umbrella approach that is taken by the EU and its member states. The EU member states can rely on the EUDEL that ensures the overall diplomatic relations with the AU. Therefore, EU member states can focus on specific areas of national interest with their limited resources. This development is well received by an EUDEL official who welcomes EU member states' commitments to engage with the AU and who stresses the added-value for the EUDEL. While the Danish example suggests complementarity between EUDEL and EU member states' activities, other diplomats from smaller EU member

⁷⁹ Interview with official, German Embassy in Addis Ababa, *op. cit.*

⁸⁰ Interview with official 3, DG DEVCO, European Commission, Brussels, 31 March 2017.

⁸¹ Interview with official 2, European External Action Service, Brussels, 31 March 2017.

⁸² Interview with official, German Embassy in Addis Ababa, *op. cit.*

⁸³ This highlights that the conceptual distinction between embassies and permanent missions is actually blurred in this case study. Nevertheless, the paper continues to use the notion of 'permanent missions' for reasons of simplicity.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Interview with official, Danish Embassy in Addis Ababa, *op. cit.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

states are more sceptical. In particular, they suspect the bigger EU member states to take advantage of the informal *ad hoc* meetings to pursue more assertively their own bilateral relations.⁸⁷ However, due to the informality of these meetings, the analysis cannot assess to what extent this statement is valid.

Regarding the AU's perception of EUDEL-EU member states' cooperation, one AU official notes that since several years the engagement of the EUDEL and of the EU member states with the AU has been progressively coordinated and complementary to each other.⁸⁸ Interestingly, he also argues that, while the AU Commission and the European Commission used to have a lot of direct contact, the EUDEL has emerged as an increasingly important diplomatic intermediary.⁸⁹ Thus, the EUDEL seems also to be perceived more and more by the AU as its main interlocutor in Addis Ababa. However, Brexit could qualify this current umbrella approach. As one official from the EUDEL mentioned, after the new AU Commission was elected, the British sought to organize a meeting with them prior to the EU. Eventually, the EU had the first meeting with the AU Commission, but the British attempt can nevertheless be interpreted as an emerging competitive behaviour regarding European diplomacy.⁹⁰ However, this would also require the AU's willingness to accept the UK's increasing bilateral interlocutor role.

The gathering and sharing of information

Thanks to the EUDEL's privileged access to official AU meetings and its capacities to attend a wide range of informal exchanges, it also has the most preferential access to information. This is why the interviewees underline that the EUDEL is the central hub for information gathering and sharing among the EU member states' permanent missions.⁹¹ Especially smaller EU member states stress their reliance on the EUDEL's information gathered from the AU, to stay informed about recent political developments, which the EU member states' permanent missions could not collect themselves due to their limited resources.⁹² A Belgian official even concludes that it is the main purpose of the EUDEL to share the gathered information among the EU

⁸⁷ Interview with official, Belgian Foreign Ministry, *op. cit.*

⁸⁸ Interview with official, African Union Commission, Addis Ababa (per telephone), 24 March 2017.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Interview with official 1, EU Delegation to the AU, *op. cit.*

⁹¹ Interview with official, German Embassy in Addis Ababa, *op. cit.*

⁹² Interview with official, Danish Embassy in Addis Ababa, *op. cit.*

member states.⁹³ Considering that the EU and its EU member states have limited access to AU meetings, an EEAS official considers that the need for constant coordination among the EUDEL and EU member states' permanent missions – like it would be the case for the UN in New York – is less urgent in Addis Ababa. The principal motivation of the EU and its EU member states to be present in Addis Ababa is to gather and to share a maximum amount of information about the AU.⁹⁴ As Drieskens and van Schaik have previously argued, it is not always self-evident that EU member states are willing to rely on information gathered by the EU Delegation.⁹⁵ In the case of the AU, this makes the EUDEL's role as the central hub for information gathering and sharing even more relevant for European diplomacy.

Nevertheless, information is also gathered and shared by EU member states' permanent missions who benefit from a certain access to the AU. For example, a German diplomat highlights that thanks to the German development agency (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, GIZ), which is to a large extent involved in development projects with the AU, Germany gathers relevant information from the AU that it can share among its European colleagues.⁹⁶ To this end, the German official stresses that there is a strong willingness of EU member states to exchange information.⁹⁷ Thus, the EUDEL can also benefit from EU member states' information, which could favour mutual dependency and consequently a higher degree of mutual trust. However, the suspicion of small EU member states vis-à-vis bigger EU member states pursuing their bilateral interest with the AU in informal meetings, could also indicate that some information is not shared afterwards. This could even apply to the EUDEL which might retain some information for its own interest.⁹⁸ While this is a comprehensible argument that questions the trustworthy interchange of information, the overall empirical analysis suggests that it is not a general tendency and that the sharing of information remains overall dynamic and open, which is an important prerequisite for effective coordination.

How does this gathering and sharing of information then translate into effective coordination? An official from the EUDEL explains that once a month a coordination meeting at ambassador level takes place in the EUDEL and, additionally, there is one

⁹³ Interview with official, Belgian Foreign Ministry, *op. cit.*

⁹⁴ Interview with official 2, European External Action Service, Brussels, *op. cit.*

⁹⁵ Drieskens and van Schaik, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

⁹⁶ Interview with official, German Embassy in Addis Ababa, *op. cit.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Interview with official, Belgian Foreign Ministry, *op. cit.*

meeting per month for the political counsellors and for the development counsellors.⁹⁹ A Danish diplomat adds that approximately once a week there are extra *ad hoc* meetings in the Delegation. Moreover, the Danish official states that there is no big difference between the degree of coordination in matters of CFSP and development issues, also because often the same EU member states officials deal with both areas.¹⁰⁰ The Belgian interviewee underlines that the EU member state who holds the Council presidency plays no role because all the official coordination meetings are chaired by and channelled through the EUDEL.¹⁰¹ So, official coordination seems to be an activity that is largely centralized by the EUDEL. According to a Finnish diplomat, this coordination is not only centralized, but also effective, especially regarding the local coordination of Union statements for formal AU PSC meetings.¹⁰² The diplomat explains that prior to AU PSC meetings, draft statements are circulated among all EU member states' permanent missions, so that every EU member state can agree to a common position and, if deemed necessary, add a point of particular interest.¹⁰³ Hence, while the Union is often the only invitee in AU PSC meetings, its statements reflect nevertheless the coordinated position of all EU member states, which underscores the centralization of its diplomatic activities. Moreover, this example embodies the umbrella approach taken by the EUDEL and the EU member states' permanent missions. Thus, at first glance, the quantitative indicator that predicted a low level of coordination does not seem to be confirmed.

However, besides the official coordination process, the informal coordination dynamics need to be addressed as well. Considering the large number of informal *ad hoc* meetings between EU member states officials and AU representatives, a German diplomat concludes that this leads to a lot of exchange and coordination among EU member states officials outside the official EUDEL channels.¹⁰⁴ Thus, the EUDEL does apparently not manage to centralize this informal coordination as well. This dispersed practice of coordination can bear the risk of overlapping activities. In case the informal coordination process does not include all EU member states, this could even result in contradicting actions. To this extent, the 0,5 points that European diplomacy scores regarding its numerous presence of EU member states' permanent missions in

⁹⁹ Interview with official 1, EU Delegation to the AU, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁰ Interview with official, Danish Embassy in Addis Ababa, *op. cit.*

¹⁰¹ Interview with official, Belgian Foreign Ministry, *op. cit.*,

¹⁰² Interview with official, Finnish Embassy in Addis Ababa, Finish Foreign Ministry, Addis Ababa (per telephone), 7 April 2017.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Interview with official, German Embassy in Addis Ababa, *op. cit.*

Addis Ababa can be partly confirmed at this point. However, EU member-state officials perceive in general this informal exchange as open and dynamic, despite some room for improvement.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, they seem largely satisfied with the effectiveness of the current informal coordination process.¹⁰⁶

Public statements as a mean to measure the centralization of advocacy

The results of this part are based on an extensive analysis of the EU member states' permanent missions' websites and the web presence of the EUDEL to the AU.¹⁰⁷ The findings suggest that advocacy, as part of the broader field of public diplomacy and measured via public statements, is the most centralized dimension of European diplomacy.

The analysis shows that France and Germany are the only EU member states whose embassies' websites include a section specifically dedicated to their respective bilateral relations with the AU.¹⁰⁸ While the focus on bilateral relations helps both countries to raise their profile in public, they present themselves in the framework of the overall EU approach. For example, German public statements highlight mostly the cooperation between Germany and the AU in the area of peace and security, which is part of the JAES priorities.¹⁰⁹ The German advocacy approach can thus be interpreted as an important commitment to AU relations. Apart from this, all other EU member states publish statements regarding their bilateral relations with Ethiopia.¹¹⁰ Even Germany seems only to publish a small number of statements, namely seven between the end of 2015 and May 2017, which are complemented by five downloadable booklets about the cooperation between Germany and the AU.¹¹¹ Regarding the overall AU-EU relations, no EU member state has apparently published any statement on its respective website. Thus, it seems that the responsibility of advocacy is completely delegated to the EUDEL. The analysis of the EUDEL's web presence confirms this conclusion. An extensive list of statements regarding AU-EU

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ All analysed EU member states' websites are listed in the bibliography.

¹⁰⁸ "Rôle de la France auprès de l'Union Africaine", French Embassy to Ethiopia and the African Union, French Foreign Ministry, 12 May 2015 (last modification); and "Deutschland und die Afrikanische Union (AU)", German Embassy to Ethiopia and the African Union, German Foreign Ministry, 2017.

¹⁰⁹ "Deutschland und die Afrikanische Union (AU)", *op. cit.*

¹¹⁰ See all analysed EU member states' websites in the bibliography.

¹¹¹ "Deutschland und die Afrikanische Union (AU)", *op. cit.*

relations can be found on the EUDEL's website.¹¹² Furthermore, the EUDEL posts on a daily basis statements on its twitter account¹¹³ and on its Facebook page.¹¹⁴ And the current ambassador Ranieri Sabatucci also has his own twitter account that he uses actively.¹¹⁵

The dense degree of channelling advocacy activities through the EUDEL is also confirmed by the interviewees. Due to limited resources, the Danish official states that public diplomacy is the first activity that the EU member states' permanent missions in Addis Ababa cease to pursue. Therefore, he sees an important added value of the EUDEL in this field of diplomatic activities.¹¹⁶ Interestingly, and in contrast to political statements, both the Danish and the Finnish official cannot recall that they have ever coordinated public EU statements.¹¹⁷ This is partly because the EUDEL uses often previously coordinated political statements and transforms them into public statements.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, the aspect of advocacy suggests that the EUDEL has not only centralized this activity, but gained a certain extent of autonomy vis-à-vis the EU member states as well. The trend to more centralization is not in opposition to EU member states' interests, but illustrates how the EUDEL can add value to the EU member states' limited resources.

Conclusion: The birth of an umbrella regional diplomacy

This paper has examined to what extent the EUDEL has emerged as a diplomatic actor that centralizes, complements or competes with the diplomatic activities of member states' permanent missions to the African Union. The analysis of the paper's research question provided relevant empirical findings confirming that the EU and its member states have developed an 'umbrella regional diplomacy' concerning the diplomatic relations with the AU. The EU ensures the overall diplomatic relations with the AU, which enables EU member states to focus on their bilateral relations with the AU within this framework in specific areas of interest to them and in alignment with the EU position. Hence, their interplay is to a large extent complementary. However, the empirical findings also show that the overall complementarity is nuanced, depending on the

¹¹² Delegation of the European Union to the African Union, *News Items*, Addis Ababa, European Union, 2017.

¹¹³ "@EUtoAU", Twitter, 2017.

¹¹⁴ "EU Delegation to the African Union", Facebook, 2017.

¹¹⁵ "@SabatucciEU", Twitter, 2017.

¹¹⁶ Interview with official, Danish Embassy in Addis Ababa, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*; and interview with official, Finnish Embassy in Addis Ababa, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁸ Interview with official, Danish Embassy in Addis Ababa, *op. cit.*

diplomatic activity. Concerning the presence in official AU meetings, the gathering and sharing of information and the issuing of public statements, the EUDEL seems to channel diplomatic activities more intensely. This trend is importantly shaped by the AU's choice of its respective diplomatic counterpart. This trend towards more centralization is also challenged by the bigger EU member states that have enough capacities to pursue their bilateral relations with the AU. Especially in informal meetings and exchanges, it is difficult to assess the extent to which these EU member states act complementarily. And Brexit could further push the UK to become a more competitive actor vis-à-vis its European colleagues.

The empirical findings also allowed to assess the strengths and flaws of the paper's theoretical framework. On the one hand, the use of the core functions of diplomacy as the conceptual framework for the case study was productive. Representation and communication allowed for a differentiated analysis that considered a wide range of facets of European diplomacy. On the other hand, both functions focus primarily on the diplomatic actor that seeks to represent itself – in this case the EU and its EU member states – but they tend to marginalize the importance of the counterpart that receives the diplomatic representatives. The empirical analysis has shown that the patterns of representation and communication among the EUDEL and the EU member states cannot be adequately explained, if the impact of the AU is not taken into account.

The 'regional umbrella approach' illustrates how the EU and its EU member states implement the Africa-EU Partnership in terms of diplomatic relations with the AU. In addition, further lessons can be drawn from this case study for other EUDELs to regional organizations, like the one to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). This EUDEL is based in Jakarta and has only recently opened in August 2015.¹¹⁹ Thus, the practice of 'umbrella regional diplomacy' could be a workable approach for this EUDEL to strengthen its diplomatic ties to EU member states and to ASEAN at the same time. Moreover, the empirical study has shown that the analysis of the EUDEL and the EU member states' permanent missions to the AU takes place in a dynamic environment. From the European perspective, Brexit is expected to remodel European diplomacy to some extent. From the African perspective, the newly elected AU Commission will shape AU-EU relations. Considering the even broader African-EU context, the need to negotiate a new arrangement that will replace the Cotonou

¹¹⁹ Delegation of the European Union to ASEAN, *About the EU Mission to ASEAN*, Jakarta, European Union, 2017.

Agreement after 2020 is another decisive factor that will influence Africa-EU relations in general and AU-EU/EU member states' diplomatic relations in particular. To this end, the 5th AU-EU Summit in November 2017 is an important step to set the priorities for the future of AU-EU relations, which will also impact the diplomatic interlocutors of both continents. Therefore, the relations between the EUDEL in Addis Ababa, its EU member states' permanent missions and the African Union will remain a dynamic process in which the EUDEL is expected to further play the crucial role of an emerging diplomatic actor.

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