



Organising for EU Enlargement

A challenge for member states and candidate countries

MANAGING EUROPE FROM HOME

The Europeanisation of the Greek Core Executive

OEUE PHASE I

Occasional Paper 4.1 – 09.03

Calliope Spanou

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens



FIFTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME



Dublin European Institute

A Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence



National and Kapodistrian
University of Athens
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and Public Administration

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Calliope Spanou

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ORGANISING FOR EU ENLARGEMENT:

Challenge for the Member States and the Candidate Countries

The Dublin European Institute, University College Dublin,¹ was awarded, in 2001, a research contract under the EU's Fifth Framework Programme² to carry out a comparative study of the impact of the EU on the structures and processes of public policy in six small countries: **Ireland, Greece, Finland, Estonia, Hungary** and **Slovenia**. The Project's partnership, under the direction of Professor Brigid Laffan, Dublin European Institute, University College Dublin³, includes: Professor Dr. Wolfgang Drechsler, University of Tartu; Professor Teija Tiilkainen, University of Helsinki; Professor Calliope Spanou, University of Athens; Professor Attila Ágh, Budapest University of Economic Sciences and Public Administration; and Professor Danica Fink-Hafner, University of Ljubljana.

The aim of the research project was to deepen our understanding of the processes of Europeanisation in a number of the existing member states and some of the candidate states.

The research project encompassed the following three objectives:

- The conduct of research which offers immediate policy relevance to key stakeholders in the enlarging Union;
- The conduct comparative, theoretical and empirical research on the management of EU public policy making in three existing member states – Ireland, Greece and Finland – and three candidate states – Estonia, Hungary and Slovenia;
- The shedding light on the capacity of smaller states to adjust and to adapt to the increasing demands of Europeanisation on their systems of public policy-making and thus to identify the barriers to effective, efficient and accountable management of EU business.

Research Strategy

The research design consisted of two phases and within each phase, two levels of analysis. **Phase I** analysed the management of EU business at the macro level of the core executive and was complemented by a micro case study of a recent policy negotiation using decision analysis. **Phase II** of the research broadened the analytical focus to encompass other levels of government – the EU and sub-state – through multi-levelled governance. Here attention was centred upon the emergence of policy networks and the interaction between public actors and the wider civil society in specific, discrete policy sectors.

¹ National University of Ireland, Dublin (University College Dublin).

² European Commission, Community Research Fifth Framework Programme (Socio-Economic Research)

³ This project forms part of the Governance Research Programme, Institute for the Study of Social Change, University College Dublin, www.ucd.ie/issc/ and www.ucd.ie/govern/intex.htm.

Methodology

The study employed two specific methodologies: historical institutionalism and rational institutionalism in a new and innovative fashion. The use of combined perspectives provided a theoretically innovative and new approach to the study of the Europeanisation process. Both approaches could be used as they were applied to different elements of the empirical research.

Academic and Policy Implications

This study's findings provide insight into the manner in which diverse state traditions, institutions and political and administrative cultures influence national adaptation to EU governance and how the interface between national policy processes and the Brussels arena is managed. It is expected that these findings will assist those making and managing policy, thus facilitating adjustments to the changing European Union while also contributing to the growing academic debate on Europeanisation.

At various stages during the course of this project the research findings and analysis were presented to a range of stakeholders and academics to facilitate feedback and enhance the analytical process. Further details about the Organising for EU Enlargement (OEUE) project are available on the project web site www.oeue.net, along with i) the Project Report, ii) the OEUE Occasional Papers and iii) a selection of papers by the research partners which draw on various aspects their project research.

AUTHOR

Calliope Spanou

Dr. Calliope Spanou is Associate Professor in the Department of Administrative Science, Faculty of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Athens. Her specialist knowledge of public administration has been applied to academic research on administrative modernisation, citizen – administration relations⁴ and environmental policy. Professor Calliope has served as an advisor with the National Centre for Public Administration (Athens) and worked with the OECD Public Management Committee.

This expertise and experience has been drawn upon by Professor Calliope when addressing aspects of Greece's engagement with the European Union notably with respect to public administration and policy management. Professor Calliope's publications in these areas include 'L'administration grecque en mutation: le double défi de la démocratisation et de l'europeanisation' *Pôle Sud* (Mai 2003 No. 18); 'Greece' in Hussein Kassim, Guy Peters and Vincent Wright (eds.) *The National Co-ordination of EU Policy – The Domestic Level* (Oxford: OUP 2000); 'Permanent Challenges? Representing Greece in Brussels' in Hussein Kassim, Guy Peters and Vincent Wright (eds.) *The National Co-ordination of EU Policy. The European Level* (Oxford: OUP 2001) and 'European integration in administrative terms: a framework for analysis and the Greek case' *Journal of European Public Policy* (Volume 5, Number 3, 1998)

⁴ Spanou, Calliope (2003), *Citoyens et Administration. Les enjeux de l'autonomie et du pluralisme* (Paris: L'Harmattan).

ABSTRACT

The dominance of individuals over structure

The Greek core executive was faced with a major challenge in managing European business because of the absence of a supportive political environment and administrative weaknesses in the early years of membership. It was not until the 1990s that sustained political support for Europeanisation emerged. The new approach to managing European affairs consisted of the political prioritisation of European issues rather than a strengthening of the institutional fabric. Informal contacts and personal networks dominate the policy process at national and European levels. Political actors look outside the administrative system for expertise on Europe on a continuous basis. The system of intra-and inter-ministerial co-ordination is weakly institutionalised and formalised. It is argued here that although the political level within the core executive has developed a capacity for managing European issues, policy-making capacity is still lacking in the administration, particularly in some domestic ministries.

INTRODUCTION

As early as 1958, less than a year after the birth of the European Economic Community, Greece's right-wing government, headed by Constantine Karamanlis, decided to apply for an association agreement. The unprecedented nature of this request combined with the divergent interests of Greece and the European Union (EU)⁵ along with the differing opinions of the Six member states explain the complexity of the negotiations which followed. The Association Agreement was finally signed in July 1961 and entered into force in 1962. However, its implementation was interrupted by the advent of the military dictatorship in 1967 and the Agreement was frozen until the dictatorship's collapse in 1974. The conservative government, again under the leadership of Constantine Karamanlis, prioritised the European Union by applying for full membership in 1975. Notwithstanding reservations in the European Commission, the Council of Ministers accepted without qualification the Greek application in February 1976. The accession negotiations commenced a few months later and lasted until 1979, with the Accession Treaty signed in Athens on the 28 May 1979. Greece joined the European Community on 1 January 1981. For the conservative led governments which promoted it, participation in the EU was viewed as a source of political and economic advantage, an opportunity to consolidate the pro-western position in Greece, a means of enhancing democracy, a source of funds, and a facilitator of economic modernization as a result of the opening of the market to competition (Kazakos 2001: 234-5; also Mitsos 1981: 72; Featherstone 1998: 23-24).

Public debate was however, characterized by the polarisation of supporters and opponents of EU membership, stemming from differences in domestic opinion concerning Greece's political orientation (Kazakos 1994: 2; Verney 1989). The party promoting EU membership was the conservative New Democracy; but the rising Socialist party (PASOK) adopted anti-Community positions, wavering between a rejection of membership, the negotiation of a 'special relationship', and the holding of a referendum. (Fragakis 1981: 91). While the Communist party continued to strongly oppose EU membership, the small Communist party 'of the Interior' was alone in presenting a line of 'critical support', identifying democratisation and modernization of the country as the potential benefits (Kazakos 2001: 331 ff.).

Accession to the European Community coincided with a major political change in Greece. In October 1981, the left wing government of PASOK came to power after almost 40 years of right wing governments. This development profoundly altered the political scenery. Until then, accession and membership were high on the political agenda whereas the first year of full membership coincided with a spectacular fall in the relative importance of the country's European priorities. The first PASOK government held hostile positions vis-à-vis the EC; which inevitably prevented 'europeanisation'.

⁵ In 1987, the European Economic Community (EEC) became known as the European Community (EC). Following the ratification of the Treaty on European Union, the EC was renamed the European Union (EU). For the sake of consistency the term EU will be used throughout this study to refer to the EEC, EC and EU.

Uncertainties concerning Greece's position in the EU characterized the early years of the PASOK government. The government deployed an offensive strategy, illustrated by a memorandum, submitted to the EU in February 1982, which argued that the negative repercussions of membership had not been sufficiently acknowledged. A transitional exemption from common market competition rules and supplementary resources were requested. Financial assistance was granted within the framework of the Integrated Mediterranean Programmes. The Greek government gained, not only resources, but also time in order to fully define its European position. In 1985, the government revised its position towards both the EU and domestic economic stabilisation policy. These revisions brought Greece more in line with the EU's economic thinking and facilitated support measures that effectively constituted 'a second accession agreement' (Kazakos 2001: 373). The end of the 1980s found Greece a net beneficiary from the EU budget. However, the resources committed to the country were poorly utilized due to deficiencies in the Greek political-administrative system. Action was taken from the early 1990s to reverse this situation.

The 1990s saw a clearer definition of a pro European policy emerge whether the government in power was of the right or left. The return to power of New Democracy in 1990 marked the beginning of this process and it did not stop with the election of PASOK in 1993. Since PASOK's experience in government in the 1980s, it had continued to distance itself from the anti EU arguments. The realignment of PASOK's position was clearly evident when, in 1996, the Prime Minister, Kostas Simitis, prioritised the necessities of EU membership and the Maastricht criteria for participation in Economic and Monetary Union (EMU).

Table 1: Key dates in Greece's relationship with the EU

1958	Start of discussions on a prospective association
1959, June	Acceptance of the application of an association agreement by the Council Ministers
1961, July	Signature on the association agreement ("Athens agreement")
1967-1974	Military dictatorship and freezing of the agreement
1975, June	Application for full membership
1976, January	Commission's Opinion proposes a pre-accession stage
1976, February	The Council of Ministers rejects the pre-accession period, accepting the Greek application
1976, July-1979	Accession negotiations
1979, May	Signature of the Accession Treaty
1981, January	Start of full membership

I STRUCTURES AND ROLES

The early arrangements

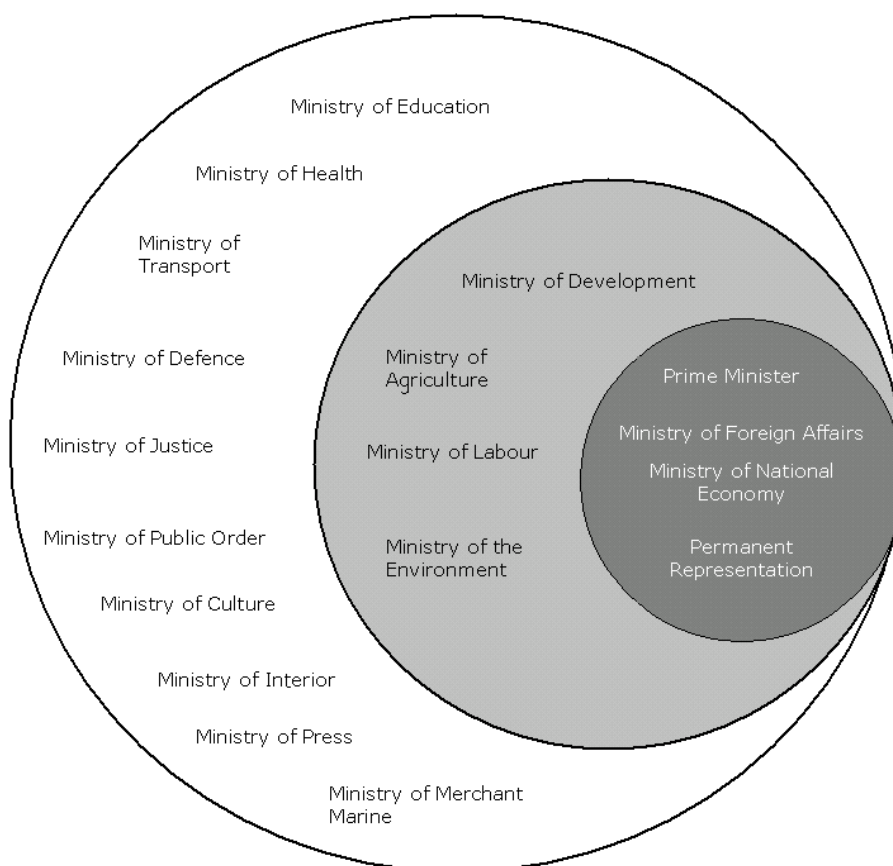
In 1962, all issues regarding the relations between Greece and the EU as well as the implementation of the Association Agreement, were placed under the general responsibility of the Ministry of (Economic) Co-ordination (MCo). A Committee of European Co-operation, comprising senior civil servants from the Ministries of Co-ordination, Foreign Affairs, Economics, Trade, Agriculture and Industry, assisted the Minister of Co-ordination with the tasks of issuing recommendations, and preparing and monitoring the negotiations. In turn, a Service of European Co-operation, established in the Ministry for (Economic) Co-ordination, facilitated this Committee. In addition, specialist divisions for EU relations were created in the ministries of Foreign Affairs (FA), Trade and Agriculture. Finally, a Permanent Representation (PeR), consisting of a permanent representative, an advisor and four economic or technical experts, was set up in Brussels and placed under the authority of the Ministry of (Economic) Co-ordination (Gyiokas 1969: 50-55).

In 1962 key positions in the management of EU business were assigned to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of (Economic) Co-ordination and these ministries still occupy the core of Greek EU policy. The structure and management of the Permanent Representation epitomized this dualism. It was placed under the Minister of (Economic) Co-ordination from whom it received instructions. The accession negotiations (1976-79) took place under the framework of the administrative arrangements originally established to implement the Association Agreement. The Ministry of (Economic) Co-ordination resumed its responsibilities (under legislation 445/76) regarding EU matters at the end of military rule. A designated junior minister was appointed and a Directorate General, staffed by civil servants, lawyers and economists, was established. Furthermore, the Ministry hosted the Central Negotiations Committee (CNC). Thus the Ministry was responsible for the majority of the preparatory work, including the examination of the European Communities secondary legislation, which on occasion involved close co-operation with the Ministry of Agriculture. However, as the negotiations progressed the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in European business was legitimately enhanced as the 'political dimension of the issue' became greater (Ioakimidis 1993: 212-3). This development coincided with changes in the political leadership of both the Ministry for (Economic) Co-ordination and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1977. A series of organisational changes in the management of the negotiations marked a shift in favour of the Department of Foreign Affairs (Tsalikoglou 1995: 47-9). A reformed Central Negotiations Committee was placed under the responsibility of the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The structures adopted on Greece's accession to the EU further strengthened the position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in respect to that of the Ministry of (Economic) Co-ordination. In contrast with the structures established under the 1976 legislation those under that of 1980

(1104/80) assigned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs responsibility for, first, the representation of Greece in the EU and second, communications between the Permanent Representation and the national administration. These changes were justified on the grounds that they reflected the hierarchy of the Council of Ministers and the increasing political status of the EU. However, the changes were criticised on the grounds that they failed to build on existing experience and expertise and therefore represented a loss to Greece’s administration. The General Directorate for relations with the EU, created in 1976 in the Ministry of (Economic) Co-ordination, was not transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who invested in building the expertise of its own personnel. However, despite the changes in the organisational structures and the distribution of responsibilities, which favoured the Department of Foreign Affairs over the Ministry of (Economic) Co-ordination in the management of EU business, the duality of the early 1960s was partly preserved.

Figure 1: Ministerial Management of EU Affairs



The prime minister’s role in EU affairs

The core executive includes the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Economy. In keeping with the parliamentary principle, the role of the prime minister within the Greek political system is very important. The office of the prime minister is

held by the leader of the party with a parliamentary majority and includes important institutional powers. Given that single party majorities are the rule in Greek politics, the Prime Minister's political weight is beyond doubt. The holder of the office directs and co-ordinates the activities of the cabinet, controls the agenda and arbitrates in conflicts. This may result in a more or less centralising policy style depending on the personality of the office holder. Unlike his predecessors, the current prime minister, Kostas Simitis, favours the operation of government based on collectivity and decentralisation. The Prime Minister is assisted by the Political Office. This is a rather small office whose remit is limited to following general policy areas on behalf of the Prime Minister. There is no special unit for EU affairs in the Office and currently this is a clear and deliberate choice, since the Prime Minister does not have a regular co-ordinating role. However, there are two units in the Political Office whose remit does include European policy:

- The Office for Strategic Planning, which formulates proposals in view of achieving government's strategic objectives and
- The Diplomatic Office, which follows issues falling within the scope of competence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These include the formulation of proposals and the organization of Prime Minister's official visits abroad, at a diplomatic level.

The office of the prime minister is organised and staffed to monitor rather than formulate policy. This represents the current prime minister's preference and is so designed to avoid a lack of continuity in Greece's European policy. Prime Minister, Kostas Simitis, believes that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and on occasions the relevant sectoral ministries are central to the formulation and management of European Union policy.

Cabinet and Cabinet Committees

During 1980, in anticipation of EU membership, responsibility for the co-ordination of the European matters was assigned to the existing Economic Committee, whose membership was enlarged for the purpose. The task was subsequently assigned to the Governmental Committee but there remained no specialised structure for the management of EU matters. This remained the case until 1993, when an Inter-ministerial Committee for the Co-ordination of Greek - EU Relations was set up after Andreas Papandreou (PASOK) regained control of the government. Created on a proposal by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs this Committee highlighted a new awareness of the need to improve co-ordination. Presided over by the Minister for Foreign Affairs the Committee brought together the economic and principle technical ministries. Although the Committee met at ministerial level the meetings at secretary general level were held more regularly. Although, formally abolished in 2000, the Committee still meets informally at the initiative of the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Currently, there is no specialised government committee on EU affairs. All major foreign policy issues are discussed in Cabinet or the Governmental Committee.⁶ The discussion of every issue

⁶ The Governmental Committee is a smaller formation within the Cabinet with a general competence.

includes its EU dimensions. The significance of the lack of a specialised body at the political level seems to be overstated (Makridimitris & Passas 1993; Ioakimidis 1993 and 1994, Spanou 1998 and 2000). Co-ordination is not only a product of institutional mechanisms but also of informal processes, attitudes and a sense of priorities. The abolition in 2000 of the Inter-ministerial Committee can thus be seen as an acknowledgement of centrifugal tendencies hindering institutionalised ministerial co-ordination. In fact, the Greek political-administrative style resists formal institutionalised horizontal co-ordination mechanisms. Prime Minister, Kostas Simitis' clear European priority is approached informally and is not reflected in institutional mechanisms. More important is the sense of European direction and consistency, that until recently was lacking.

Outward representation: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The political leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs includes the minister, an alternate minister responsible for European affairs and two General Secretaries. Under the authority of the General Secretary of European Affairs, the General Directorate of EU Affairs currently ensures the general co-ordination of all policies; it consists of four Directorates (External Affairs; European Integration and Economic and Monetary policy; Internal Market, Agriculture and New Community Policies; Justice and Internal Affairs) and a European Parliament Bureau. A special Legal Service of the EU under the direct authority of the minister comprises a European Law Division responsible for monitoring legal incorporation and transgressions of Community law.

Economic co-ordination: the Ministry of the National Economy

In October 2001 the Ministry of National Economy and the Ministry of Finance began to operate under the new Ministry of the Economy, with centralised responsibility for all aspects of economic policy, including EU issues. However, for the moment the internal structure of the former ministries remains intact and the focus in this section of the paper is on that part of the Ministry of the Economy that would have formerly constituted the Ministry of National Economy. A junior minister is responsible for regional policy and investment, including the management and monitoring of the Community Structural Funds, the Cohesion Fund and Community Initiatives. Internal Market issues also fall under the remit of the junior minister.

The Ministry for National Economy is seen as the main staff ministry for economic policy, occupying centre stage with respect to the economic aspects of the EU policy co-ordination network. Its co-ordinating role has nevertheless attracted criticisms from sectoral ministries (Minakaki 1992; Anastopoulos 1988; Stephanou 1993). The General Secretariat of Investment and Development within the Ministry of the Economy has an equally important role for domestic co-ordination of EU policy, under the direct responsibility of a junior minister. Comprised of a General Directorate of Regional Policy and Investment, it co-ordinates the elaboration and implementation of the Community Support Framework, regional development programmes and Community Initiatives.

The mapping of the core executive structures would not be complete without reference to the highly regarded Council of Economic Experts (SOE) created in 1987 and proximate to the Minister of National Economy. It was granted an advisory role in economic policy and, therefore, in ECOFIN matters. The SOE's formal tasks, as specified in law, did not make specific reference to the EU, however, the Europeanisation of economic policy has led SOE to undertaking a major role in EU policy, extending far beyond mere expert advice. The SOE is composed of a Scientific Council, which forms a 'think tank' comprising, seven academics chosen by the Minister for a three year term; an Economic Research and Analysis Unit, staffed by experts on contract; and a Secretariat, including permanent civil servants and ministry personnel. While the SOE constitutes an independent unit within the Ministry, it works in close co-operation with its civil servants. The SOE combines an institutionalised political character with expertise, in a quite distinct but admittedly successful structure. Furthermore, the SOE has strengthened the economic expertise of the Ministry and its President has often been in the front line of negotiations and relations with the European Commission, notably in the run up to Greece joining EMU. The SOE's members constitute 'the voice of Greece in Brussels' when representing the country regarding matters of general economic policy in the Economic Policy Committee, the Economic and Financial Committee and the working groups of the Council of Ministers.

Inner core: the prevalence of a vertical logic

The inner core of the core executive includes the Ministry of Agriculture, together with other ministries most involved in European policies, such as the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Development (including trade, industry, consumer affairs, tourism, energy and research) and the Ministry of Environment. The inner core is dominated by a sectoral logic countering the horizontal co-ordination by either of the two lead ministries (Ministry of Economy or Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The role of the Ministry of Agriculture illustrates this point. Even before Greece's accession to the EU, the Ministry of Agriculture was granted an important degree of independence in European matters as early as 1979 (Law 992/1979). A number of structural adjustments allowed it to further establish its independence from the lead ministries to the extent that it has become an 'independent kingdom' in the words of an official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Permanent Representation

Greece's Permanent Representation is headed by an ambassador, who is put forward by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and approved by the Cabinet. Furthermore, a diplomat serves as deputy rather than a technocrat from a ministry, as is most often the case in other permanent representations (Hayes-Renshaw & Wallace 1997). However, the dualism of the lead ministries is reflected in the high ranking position of the Economic Advisor, a position initially established in 1980, who heads the Economic Policy Unit and co-ordinates the work of economic and technical ministries particularly since the broadening of the EU's economic policy remit. Notably, the Permanent Representation also hosts an agricultural policy unit headed by an expert from the Department of Agriculture who participates in the EU's Special Committee on Agriculture.

Figure 2. Greece's Permanent Representation to the EU

Greece's Permanent Representation Ministries represented	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foreign Affairs ▪ Economy and Finance ▪ Agriculture ▪ Development (Industry, Energy, Technology, Trade and Tourism) ▪ Transport and Communications ▪ Labour and Social Security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Health ▪ Education ▪ Merchant Marine ▪ Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works ▪ Justice ▪ Public Order ▪ Press

In 2000, the Permanent Representation included 94 persons, 55 of which are involved in policy issues, plus back-up support staff (administrative, secretarial and technical) (Spanou 2001). In the region of 13 staff are diplomats, while the remaining staff, specialised officers (attachés), are seconded from either the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or other ministries. The ratio of diplomats to sectoral staff is thus lower than the average of 40% among the permanent representations of the other member states (Lequesne 1993: 196; Hayes-Renshaw & Wallace 1997: 221-23). In anticipation of Greece's Presidency of the EU in 2003, the Permanent Representation's staff was increased to approximately 120 persons at the end of 2002, with the additional staff coming mainly from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Though the number of higher officials and diplomats has remained relatively stable since 1985, Greece's Permanent Representation is among the largest. Two reasons are generally put forward (Stephanou 1986: 7; Makridimitris & Passas 1993: 55) to explain this, first, the distance of EU decision making centres from Athens makes it difficult to have frequent contacts with sectoral ministries and, second, the tendency for sectoral ministries to have their own representatives in Brussels. This being the case it may be suggested that the number of personnel in the Permanent Representation reflects the competition between horizontal and sectoral ministries and the tendency to by-pass the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Ministry of the National Economy.

II PROCESSES

The macro management of EU business relies on a formal network of relationships and processes mainly built around the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is the official nodal point. The Prime Minister's Office is confined to a residual role that includes advisory, communication and conflict resolution functions. More specifically, the Strategic Planning Office a) monitors major issues on behalf of the prime minister, such as the future of Europe, the Cyprus question and its accession to the EU, the Common European Security and Defence Policy and European Summits; and b) assists the Prime Minister in crisis management/conflict resolution.

In monitoring major issues, identified by the Prime Minister, the Strategic Planning Office collaborates with the minister and alternate Minister of Foreign Affairs. It does not intervene directly but rather formulates comments on the final documents prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Further, this unit deals only with matters that risk provoking a 'crisis' between ministries and then only to the extent that there is some dysfunction in the relationship between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the other ministries. These 'crisis management' and 'conflict resolution' functions are basically informal and are exercised infrequently. After assessing the various conflicting positions on a given issue, the head of the Strategic Planning Office formulates his views and examines possible alternatives. It is the prime minister who approves the one to be adopted, something that maximizes decision-making efficiency and clarity of positions. The Diplomatic Office serves a less complex role (headed by a Diplomat from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) dealing essentially with bilateral relations and acting as an information and documentation channel between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister's office while not engaging in policy elaboration.

The Prime Minister and both of the above units along with their heads are involved in regular contacts with their EU counterparts and coalition building is an everyday practice. Coalitions are not shaped on the basis of pre-existing affinities or size, but on the basis of national preferences on the issue in question. Regarding developments at the EU level, the general position is also clear, 'We are always with the "more Europe" front'. The 'more Europe' stance of the Greek government is shaped by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, while the latter defends and spreads this policy vis-à-vis other ministries. Based on substantial preparation by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Prime Minister's office finally shapes the Prime Minister's positions for European Councils. However, only in exceptional circumstances are positions on certain issues revised by the Prime Minister's office and alternative ones suggested.

Prime Minister, Kosta Simitis has not claimed a routine co-ordinating role which would amount to centralisation; he reserves for himself a residual role of conflict resolution (negative co-ordination) but also a positive role of marking and spreading European policy priorities and safeguarding consistency (positive co-ordination - socialisation). This might be interpreted as a first sign of a low co-ordination ambition but is equally a consequence of the adoption of a

decentralized political style: centralisation in the Greek political-administrative system often takes the form of passing on to the centre 'difficult' decisions normally falling into the scope of lower levels of government. Besides, setting and diffusing EU membership priorities as well as consistency in European policy positions are of utmost importance in a political-administrative context that seems to defy institutional co-ordination.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs prepares the General Affairs Council and the European Council. The Ministry has a close working relationship with the Prime Minister and his Office. This includes regular weekly meetings between the political leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister. Beyond the political aspects of EU membership, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs claimed and received a role of inter-sectoral co-ordination, i.e. it acts as an intermediary between the other ministries and the EU. In principle, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the only transmission channel for national positions on specialised, sectoral issues to the Permanent Representation. However, sectoral representation is tolerated on condition that it is carried out in co-operation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Responsibility for this co-operation lies with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs whose personnel handle various policy fields and ensure contacts with the technical ministries and the Permanent Representation. Weekly meetings take place at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with representatives of other ministries in order to prepare the agenda of the COREPER (which in most cases is already at an advanced state of negotiation) and to transmit guidelines and instructions to the Permanent Representation ad hoc meetings. These more formal contacts are complemented by frequent personal contact among personnel.

The co-ordinating role of the General Secretariat of EU Affairs and the services involved is somewhat uneven, depending on the policy sector. The most obvious exception is economic co-ordination, where the Ministry of National Economy has the main responsibility. The inevitably technocratic and complex character of economic issues accounts for the 'singular' autonomy of the Ministry of National Economy in managing EU issues (Ioakimidis 1993: 220). Positions transmitted from the Ministry of National Economy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are forwarded to the Permanent Representative without any comment from the Ministry. A further substantial exception to the co-ordination role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerns the Ministry of Agriculture (an 'independent kingdom'), because of the sheer volume and the extreme technicality of this policy sector. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs conducts its co-ordination role at a distance. Sectoral ministries have a wide scope in shaping their positions and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs intervenes when 'external relations' are affected (Ioakimidis 1993: 219). Thus, co-ordination consists of following the agenda of the Council and knowing the positions to be presented, without necessarily knowing how and why they have been shaped and without having participated in their elaboration.

Although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is formally able to alter the position of the other ministries, in practice, this depends on how much it has the capacity to go into the substance of the matter, which is not an easy task. Only a limited number of issues are discussed, in the

interest of safeguarding the compatibility of positions. If a disagreement occurs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 'freezes' the process so that the issue of contention is re-examined. Given that it does not have the authority to impose its views, its main instruments are persuasion and as a last resort, the authoritative intervention of the prime minister, which is an emergency procedure seldom used.

Formal codes, rules and guidelines do not appear to exist, at least in any systematic way. When co-ordinating ministries need the contribution of sectoral ministries they issue general guidelines. This is particularly evident in the case of the management of the Community Support Frameworks. In general, the EU management system seems to operate in a decentralised (or even fragmented) manner around minimal obligations for information and co-ordination, mainly at the decision stage of the EU policy process. The co-ordination difficulties faced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stem from insufficient preparation at the domestic level and the lack of clear sectoral priorities. Therefore, the ambitions for co-ordination tend to be rather modest and of a pragmatic nature. The centralisation of position formulation is selective, depending on the political priority attached to the issue. Most often, highly political issues are better prepared and co-ordinated.

The EU Directorate of the Ministry of National Economy prepares the dossier for the minister in co-operation with the Office for EU Legal Issues. The Council of Economic Experts (SOE) deals with important ECOFIN matters with the greatest part of the responsibility falling on its President. The President enjoys wide discretion in order to provide appropriate and high quality advice to the Minister of National Economy. Preparation of the dossier starts alternatively within the EU Directorate or the SOE. The President of the SOE shapes the positions to be presented by the Minister at ECOFIN level. The whole system functions on an *ad hoc* basis and is characterised by the wide discretion and scope of the President of the SOE. Co-ordination ensured by the SOE relies mainly on personal networks.

Generally speaking, the Ministry of National Economy's role in co-ordination appears rather limited and reactive in character. Though technical ministries develop their own networks and contacts with Brussels, something that inevitably contributes to the limits of the co-ordination role of the Ministry of National Economy, the ever widening and deepening economic policies of the EU (EMU, Single market, regional policies and CSF) in conjunction with the development of internal expertise (SOE included) render the Ministry of National Economy a major centre of EU management. Co-ordination is seen as 'quite a heavy task', since most of EU business management falls on a small number of persons in the Ministry and the SOE. The weakness in the policy capacity of sectoral ministries is a source of extra strain. However, the increasing importance of the role of the Ministry of National Economy stems more from *ad hoc* expertise and staff appointments on political criteria than from the development of the capacities of the normal civil service.

Information is normally transmitted through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is the main (or even exclusive) domestic correspondent of the Permanent Representation. There are regular -monthly- meetings between the Ambassador and the political leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Contacts with the ministers of Foreign Affairs and National Economy also take place before the meetings of the General Affairs Councils and the ECOFIN. Less often, there are contacts with the prime minister, usually ahead of European Council meetings. However, the sheer volume of information, the technicality of the issues and the quantity of accompanying documents justify direct contacts with the ministries involved. In spite of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' monopoly claim, in practice the communications network involves close and regular contacts between the head of the Economic Policy Unit with the Ministry of National Economy and the (SOE) in Athens while the Agricultural sector unit is to a large extent 'an extension' of the corresponding home department. Officers from technical ministries are frequently in touch with their ministries, either for information or for policy positions. The tendency to bypass the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is stronger among the representatives of sectoral ministries for reasons to do with the technicality of the issues and the capacity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to effectively intervene. However, since 1994 direct contacts by the sectoral attachés with home ministries are officially not allowed, except in emergencies, in order to defend the monopoly of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the intermediary role of the Permanent Representation.

Normally, disagreement over policy positions between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and another Ministry has to be solved by successive meetings in Athens. However, rivalries between the two lead ministries, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of National Economy, and the sectoral departments originating in Athens may continue within the Permanent Representation, increased by the diversity of the ministerial origin of the personnel. Though there is nothing original about inter-sectoral conflicts and departmentalism (Lequesne 1993), the extent to which sectoral perspectives are integrated may vary (Hayes-Renshaw et al. 1989: 127-9). Staff appointed in an ad hoc and *ad personam* way maintain (and are keen to maintain) close links with the political leadership of their ministry in order to provide them with the necessary support in the performance of their duties; by contrast, dependence upon, and loyalty towards, the Head of the Permanent Representation tends to be weakened. The mode of operation is therefore hierarchical and centralizing (since everything transits through the ambassador and his deputy) but also fragmented, since it preserves sectoral segmentation.

Horizontal co-ordination is insufficient for reasons of inadequate preparation of policy priorities and strategies at the domestic level. This is not exclusively linked to EU policies but affects domestic ones as well, and constitutes a common feature of Greek administration. Certain sectoral ministries are often incapable of shaping their priorities and positions at the required time because of weak administration and policy capacity. This constitutes an important problem for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but also for the Permanent Representation in Brussels, which has then to fill the gap. Therefore, an important issue is the policy capacity of the domestic administration, e.g. setting of priorities, preparing positions, studying the implications of, and

reacting to, policy proposals. This policy capacity is unevenly distributed within the Greek administration while European policy priorities do not always permeate home departments.

From the point of view of the Permanent Representation, domestic weaknesses may be seen to include a lack of appropriate institutional backing. Delays in the transmission of national positions prevent active participation from the start of the discussions and might even lead to contradictory positions. Absence of clear priorities and instructions increases the latitude and the role of the attachés. This may be seen as a 'loose policy framework' allowing wider discretion (Wright 1996; Lequesne, 1993; Hayes-Renshaw & Wallace 1997; Nugent 1996). For sectoral policies there is *de facto* more latitude for negotiation; but the opposite holds, for 'high politics' issues, closely linked to political priorities, where positions are strictly defined and allow less margin for negotiation. In practice, the degree to which instructions from the centre are binding varies according to the issue and cannot qualify globally Greece's participation in the EU decision-making.

The absence of a general policy framework nevertheless makes initiatives rather risky and the access to the political level may be an important parameter determining how far Permanent Representation officers can go. Thus, in some cases the Permanent Representation appears as an actor who *de facto* shapes policy. These functions, informally performed by the Permanent Representation, might equally explain the question of its size discussed above. The size of the Greek Permanent Representation reflects its importance and it plays an important role in first, facilitating the proximity of many government ministries to the EU institutions and second, assisting in the monitoring of EU policies and developments. Administrative deficiencies at the domestic level have pushed not only co-ordination but also policy formulation upwards to the level of the Permanent Representation. Thus the importance of the Permanent Representation has been increased and it is entrusted with a role beyond that initially envisaged and for which capacity was provided.

III THE AGENTS

Given the rather non-institutionalised operation of the Greek system, the importance of agents becomes crucial in many respects. From the above analysis, this importance of individuals stands out as a prominent feature of the Greek case. One general characteristic of Greece's management of EU business is that the system (with the possible exception of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) relies on a relatively limited number of staff many of who are either political appointees (advisors) or hold positions, which are influenced by political criteria. Another characteristic is the lack of an organized/institutionalised EU specialist cadre and the frequent search for relevant expertise outside the civil service, among academics or highly specialised young professionals from the open labour market. The consequences of these characteristics is a low degree of continuity and the absence of the means to contribute to a long-term development of a body of civil servants or of a 'European' career path.

For diplomats, an appointment as a Permanent Representative or a Deputy does not require any previous EU experience. Diplomats, at any level in the hierarchy, may be appointed to a diverse range of positions only some of which have a European dimension. Thus a European career is more likely to be the exception rather than the rule. Exceptions may occur in respect to the experts from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but who are not members of the diplomatic corps. The informal career path of this corps of 'expert' civil servants often involves their being 'recycled' between similar positions in the ministry or in Brussels. Furthermore those 'experts' on contract may not be integrated in the civil service and are therefore 'lost' to the Greek administration, as nobody knows where they end up.

No previous experience or familiarity with EU decision making is required for those on secondment from the sectoral ministries to the Permanent Representation. It is far from guaranteed that the expertise acquired in Brussels will be used upon return. On the contrary, on their return staff may be placed in any position or even be intentionally marginalized in the service since their appointment to Brussels is seen as a privilege, which is envied. In such a context, tenured civil servants may be interested in prolonging their stay and pursuing a career in the European Commission or being appointed, with the help of the government, as 'national experts'. Following such appointments it is very unlikely that they will ever return to Greece. This outcome applies mostly in the case of attachés from sectoral ministries, given that they have nothing to expect in terms of career advancement once they are back in their home ministry.

The very fact that there are no data available providing details on the numbers of civil servants who have experience in the Permanent Representation illustrates the absence of a systematic policy. This situation reveals first, the low priority given to EU matters by individual ministers and Greek administration and second, the general neglect of staff responsibilities and policy expertise. The lack of a systematic human resource policy leads to a gap between the needs and availability of the required expertise. This gap is often addressed in an *ad hoc* manner. With the exception of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, most of EU expertise in the ministries is drawn from outside the civil service. This has been particularly evident during the preparations for the European Union Presidency, which have involved the mobilisation of greater numbers of staff. However, it is interesting to note that the lack of EU expertise in the public administration is not replicated in Greek society or its labour market. Therefore, the question is how the civil service deals with this external expertise (recruitment, incentives structure, career perspectives, utilisation of expertise). Political advisors or appointees or *ad hoc* recruitments are used to compensate for this qualitative inadequacy in the civil service human resources.

One approach has been to hire personnel, with high levels of specialisation and skills, on contract from the general labour market. These employees do not necessarily stay for long, since the position they hold is sensitive to political criteria (advisors to political leadership) and/or does not offer interesting career prospects. Therefore, generally this approach does not ensure staff continuity or the long-term upgrading of human resource skills. Even cases where

these employees are integrated into the civil service system (for example, when awarded tenure) they are assimilated into the existing structure and career scheme. In the absence of an awareness of different kinds of EU expertise the skills of these staff may be inadequately drawn upon.

An alternative approach has been to fill the gap in EU expertise (and other areas) by drawing on those professions where the expertise already exists for example, the academic environment. Academics are present at different levels of the Greek political-administrative system, they are to be found holding elected office and political appointments as heads of public agencies and corporations in addition to serving as political advisors to the prime minister and ministers. This approach is illustrated by the Council of Economic Experts (SOE), which is technocratic and political in character and thus institutionalises the role of academic experts. Academics seem to have come to serve a high-level role substituting for civil service expertise.

At the political level one might suggest that a 'European elite' is gradually taking shape. Political appointees are frequently used as the means of diffusing and managing European priorities and are placed in positions supervising important areas of EU interest. Their rank include of that of special advisor or General Secretary and the positions held may be close to the prime minister and corresponding ministers. Their rank ranges from Special and General Secretary to ministerial level; they might also occupy advisory positions near the prime minister or corresponding minister. This may be viewed as an acknowledgement that bureaucracy is difficult to mobilize and a way to make the best out of it through a capable political appointee who is often an expert in the area (and often an academic).

The whole EU policy system in Greece tends to rely on a small number people known for their awareness, sensitivity, general capabilities and competence in EU matters. These people are placed in key positions and entrusted with the task of overcoming the weaknesses in the regular civil service. However, this means that a small number of people are burdened with a significant range of responsibilities, which may result in a loss of efficiency and the discouragement of commitment in the long run. Under this system the civil service may find itself being used in a complementary way rather than carrying out essential tasks and fulfilling requirements at a higher level with the result it is affected by europeanisation in a minimal way. From another perspective, individuals in key positions and who are trusted may be expected to overcome historical institutional rigidities. The absence of institutional backing allows scope for individual initiatives and strategies. Success is often attributed to these informal dynamics and personal commitment. However, as a working method, it does not ensure continuity, nor does it shape the conditions necessary for long-term improvements. While the institutions may benefit from the commitment, knowledge and skills of individuals their institutional experience may only serve as a stepping-stone for personal advancement.

Relations between the Core Executive and the national Parliament

The nature of Greek parliamentary control has been regarded as minimal (Fragakis 1981: 94). Apart from its traditional ways of influencing governmental policies, the Parliament hardly plays any role in the domestic co-ordination of European policies. The extensive use of legislative delegation for the incorporation of European legislation, often of technical nature, leaves the Parliament outside this process, thus limiting its information and the opportunities to debate the corresponding issues. Strong single party majorities, which have dominated the Parliament since 1974, have not stimulated the exercise of Parliamentary oversight (Ioakimidis 1994: 149-51). Parliament has not shown any particular interest in EU affairs, while other possibilities offered have been insufficiently used (Yannis 1996). More recently, however, apart from questions to ministers, there have been pre-agenda discussions concerning the country's EU membership, mostly on the initiative of the prime minister. The alternate minister or the minister of Foreign Affairs attends a special Parliamentary session to inform MPs on subjects defined upon their request. Once a year, the plenary session of the Parliament discusses EU developments at party leaders level.

It was only in 1990 that a Parliamentary Committee for European Affairs was established, based on a decision of the President of the Chamber, explicitly referring to a motion of the European Parliament recommending its creation. It is composed by national and European MPs on an equal basis; its task is to continuously follow European Community affairs and the action taken by the Greek authorities and to express consultative opinions on them by submitting reports to the Parliament and the Government. According to Yannis (1996), the political visibility of this Committee is low, because of the rather technical character of the issues and its consensual mode of operation. Its establishment reduces, however, the introverted character of the Greek Parliament, and promotes its 'Europeanisation'. More recently, the Committee began to meet regularly and to play an increasingly active part in the network of similar structures. Generally speaking, the institutional equipment of the Parliament is sufficient to allow for the constant or *ad hoc* monitoring and influencing of EU-Greece relations. The 'democratic deficit' in the Greek context is not the result of inappropriate or deficient organisational arrangements (Papadimitriou 1995: 143; also Theodorakis 1994) observed that, on the contrary, the Parliament does not make enough use of the possibilities offered and does not constitute an essential part of a comprehensive approach to European policies.

CONCLUSION

The Greek case study on the core executive highlights a number of important parameters that determine the management of EU affairs. Among them is the weight of domestic political considerations and priorities, which affect the general framework of administrative responsiveness with regard to the EU. The critical junctures have therefore been both of a domestic nature; the first was identified as the coincidence between the start of full EU membership and a major governmental change that brought to power a party prone to anti-EU positions. This accounts for the way in which early membership requirements were regarded and prevented the expected and hoped for 'europeanisation' (which some refer to as 'modernisation') of the Greek political-administrative system. The second critical juncture acknowledged the awareness that the Greek way of envisaging membership (but also domestic policies), in an increasingly internationalised environment, had reached its limits. It marked a new approach to EU membership that emerged in the 1990's and was fully established by 1996 under Prime Minister Simitis.⁷

Greek public administration, marked by its weakness and dependence vis-à-vis politics, did not develop its European capacities during the formative period of the 1980's. However, during the 1990s it was required to catch up on a delay of over 10 years of adjustment. In many respects, EU requirements served as a legitimising argument for changes that should have been introduced long before. In that sense Greece may be seen as 'adapting faster politically than administratively' (Christakis 1998: 98).

Nevertheless, the change in political priorities did not entail any visible change in terms of institutional arrangements. This highlights that the domestic political-administrative culture defies institutionalised/formalized co-ordination and rather relies on informal contacts. These imply, in turn, a personal dimension in policymaking and co-ordination processes. Indeed, personal networks and commitment are often important explanatory factors for successful operation and performance. This tends to be a systematic way of giving an impulse to the generally unsatisfactory administrative routine. The choice of people in political, policy or responsibility positions seems crucial; and their task appears immense, especially when they are required to change the course of things at a rather late stage.

The low expertise available within most parts of the civil service is handled by the systematic recourse to *ad hoc* solutions, e.g. by drawing high level expertise from other parts of Greek society, mainly the universities but also the open labour market. This expertise operates often as a high level substitute for the civil service, which, unfortunately, does not benefit from it. It also involves intensive use of political appointees who present these characteristics. Thus, notwithstanding the undoubted development of EU expertise within public administration since the 1980's, the rhythm of this development leaves a lot to be desired. Though the co-ordinating

⁷ One might eventually add as a critical juncture the impact of the dictatorship through the freezing of negotiations, though it is a juncture of a different form.

executive is now in a much better position, inadequate policy capacity in most sectoral departments accounts for the lack of institutional backing.

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