

ANNEX J: SECONDMENT SURVEY RESULTS

Secondments were used under the EUN Programme in addition to the traditional interventions based on partnerships, with a budget of approximately DKK 20 million per year. The deployments took place in the seven priority countries and were directed towards supporting actions relevant to the main objectives of the Danish Neighbourhood Programme. According to programme documents, secondments are used strategically to promote Danish priorities, and contribute to and reinforce internationally established surveillance and monitoring missions including the work of selected multilateral organisations. This analysis is based primarily on the EUN Programme Document for Secondment Policy¹, interviews with EUN staff, and the **Evaluation of the Danish Neighbourhood Programme: Secondment Survey 2016** that was presented in Annex I and administered in July 2016.

An “in-kind” modality which supports solidarity with the international community

Secondments demonstrate an approach to diversifying aid mechanisms within the EUN programme portfolio that is more directly targeted at the political and diplomacy level. They are implemented in situations where the Danish Foreign Ministry (DFA) wishes to collaborate on multilateral efforts for a number of reasons (e.g. immediate handling of crisis situations), and work in solidarity with the international community in support of sustainable development, protection of human rights and promotion of peace and stability. In this functionality, secondments illustrate a distinct way that EUN’s political and development assistance activities support and cross-fertilise each other.

According to EUN staff, the origination of a secondment assignment is determined through an open dialogue between hosting organisations and the MFA. EUN reviews and decides which initiatives to support with staff or experts based on key programmatic and thematic priorities, or sensitive and urgent political/stabilisation needs in the neighbourhood region. Also considered are areas within the neighbourhood region that are thinly covered and may need extra resources (i.e., lack an embassy presence). A special “in-kind” modality, the programme amounted roughly to 20-25 contracted secondments on average a year, with 90% of the positions filled by Danish nationals². So far, most of the experts deployed have been seconded to the OSCE and the EU. To investigate what had happened in the area of secondments, an online questionnaire was administered by the evaluation team in July 2016 to a group of EUN seconded staff from the programme years 2008 to 2016.

A majority of secondment posts are 1-2 years, with a large percentage also extended to 3-4 years according to survey respondents, and very few were in the post less than a year (only five out of 35). Although expenditures have been DKK 20 million or less per year, the total amount spent is actually quite significant. From 2008 until 2015, a total of DKK 147,241,453 has been spent on staff seconded under the Danish neighbourhood programme. From the 35 seconded staff who responded to the survey, nearly 50% were supporting the work of a multilateral organisation (e.g., EU, EULEX, and EUSR) and deployed in-country or in a conflict/post-conflict context. The rest were part of a special monitoring mission (e.g., OSCE, EUMM) or with a multilateral organisation, but in a headquarters location.

Stated **Engagement Objectives (EQ2)** for secondments are twofold, according to the programme document:

¹ Danida, EUN Programme Document “Sekunderingspolitik i EUN”, November 2015, and revised on April 2016.

² In policy, the secondment recruiting process was open to all applicants, regardless of nationality.

- i) Contribute to and reinforce internationally established surveillance and monitoring missions and to the work of selected multilateral organisations;
- ii) To promote Danish priorities (which, from the assignments we reviewed, could be translated into addressing acute security challenges in the neighbourhood region).

Feedback from the survey showed that most of the respondents felt that the outputs from their secondment mission made a key contribution towards the principal programme objective above, as well as primarily towards human rights and democracy, and strengthening of civil society. Furthermore, experts that were deployed reinforced Danish political priorities and security in the region by providing timely resources to support the work of multilateral organisations in-country, such as in response to continuing unrest in the Ukraine. An overwhelming majority of survey respondents (85%) stated that their secondment directly supported (in a medium to high degree) the objective of the **first engagement area** of the Danish Neighbourhood Programme: “Human rights and democracy, including good governance, conflict resolution and peace-building, gender equality, minority rights, indigenous peoples’ rights, as well as strengthening of civil society and independent media.” This was in addition to responding to two interrelated objectives: 1) **strengthening of civil society** and capacity of public authorities (71%); and, 2) **stabilisation and security, conflict resolution and peace-building** (82%). A little more than half of respondents also felt that they had contributed to advancing Danish priorities in the neighbourhood region, such as “deepening collaboration between EU and Neighbourhood” by “raising awareness about EU and EU values” (as one respondent commented). The crucial contribution of the secondments was materialized by providing expert advice and support on establishing transparent processes within human rights, governance, Rule of Law and improving awareness and involvement of the civil society in monitoring salient issues concerning human rights protection.

On the other hand, a majority of seconded staff surveyed did not feel that their work contributed to the second engagement area of the Danish Neighbourhood Programme: “sustainable and inclusive economic development, including skills development, job creation, energy and green technology”. More than 79% of survey respondents stated that their secondment did not respond at all, or to a very low degree in this area. Correspondingly since the secondments supported mostly politically-driven initiatives, the missions did not have a direct connection to the additional objectives (**EQ5**) of the neighbourhood programme, such as Danish commercial interests or private sector, other than the indirect effects of on-going reforms and stabilisation of the region as a whole, which in turn contributes to a better regulatory environment that is beneficial for Danish businesses in the future. Thus a key opportunity to pursue in the future could be to plan and organise secondments to organisations in the neighbourhood region working closely with economic development and the private sector.

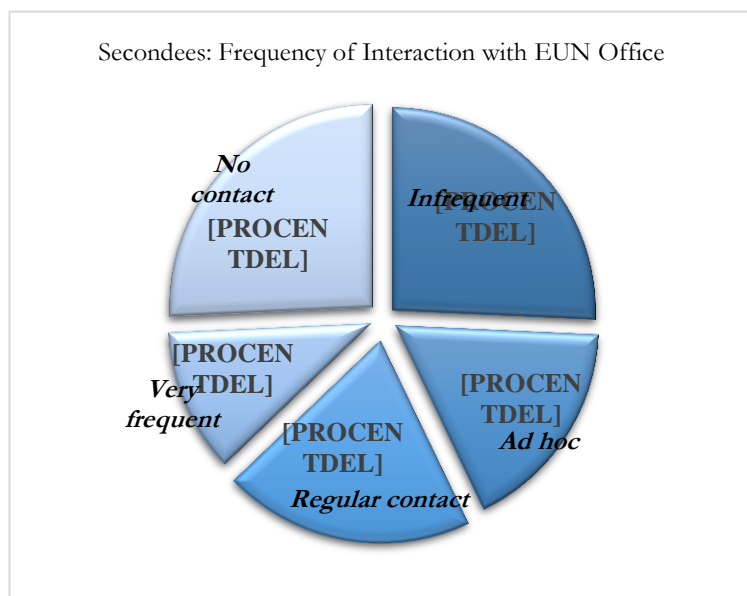
Shifts in the geographic and thematic focus of secondments over time, Kosovo to Ukraine

From 2008 to 2013, the engagement had been much larger in Kosovo which received a significant majority of the EUN secondments, with consistent (albeit small) presence in the same period in Georgia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Most of these posts with EULEX and EUSR focused on good governance, Rule of Law, state building, and stabilisation and security. For example, one of the respondents worked with EULEX as the Head of the Strengthening Division (SD) mainly focused on capacity building in Rule of Law (e.g., police, courts, prosecution/correctional, and the Ministry of Interior) to enable local institutions in Kosovo to operate in accordance with European and established human rights standards.

In 2014, the political priority completely shifted to Ukraine with the advent of the crisis. Ukraine, and specifically the OSCE Monitoring Mission, became the largest receiver of EUN seconded staff, which remains to the present day. As of June 2016, Denmark is providing 13 out of a total of 709 mission monitors³. There has been a continued presence in Georgia and Bosnia and Herzegovina for all secondment programme years (2008-2016). In Georgia support to the EUMM (monitoring mission) will continue to contribute to stabilisation and peacekeeping. However, support to the EUSR in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and EULEX in Kosovo, will be phased out in 2016 and 2017, respectively⁴.

Lack of monitoring and knowledge sharing within the secondment programme

Secondments were continuously used by the EUN programme since 2008, however there is no evidence of any analysis, or monitoring or evaluation of the secondment missions. Thus longer-term impact, transformational effects and sustainability (EQ3) cannot be measured. In the absence of



evidence of a systematic monitoring or evaluation of the secondment assignments, the survey explored if there had been a formalised and documented process of communication and interaction between EUN and seconded staff. More than half of survey respondents had either **no contact or infrequent contact** with the EUN office. If there was any contact from the office, for some seconded staff it was only on contractual or human resources matters. Other respondents noted that most of the infrequent/ad hoc contact was “one way”, initiated from the seconded staff to the EUN office. It is important to note that contact varied depending of the type secondment

mission, particularly if it was a monitoring mission (SMM), where nationality of seconded staff was not emphasised and monitors worked as a cohesive group towards the mission objectives with limited contact to host governments (considered to be a sensitive issue). In Ukraine, the OSCE Head of Human Dimension Unit in an interview stated that he was not aware of any information sharing between monitors and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and one survey respondent stated that the “OSCE Code of Conduct for staff members prohibits sharing work-related internal information with seconding authorities.” Another respondent noted that having such unclear guidelines for communication between seconded staff and the EUN office also contributed to the lack of frequency. Of the respondents that had more regular contact, examples were briefings on the assignments (initiated by either the seconded or the EUN office), or secure emails with requests for specific information, or events organised by EUN in Copenhagen or meetings in Brussels.

³ This is according to a meeting in Ukraine conducted by the evaluation team in June 2016 with the OSCE Head of Human Dimension Unit Florian Razesberger, as well as an internal EUN document: “Kort over danske Ukraine udstationerede sidst opdaterede” from June 2016.

⁴ This is according to the most updated copy of the EUN/Danida Programme Document “Sekunderingspolitik i EUN”, November 2015, and revised on April 2016.

Of the small group (31% of respondents) that had very frequent or regular contact, there was a critical, yet unofficial exchange of information (which was not recorded regularly or in any reports) between EUN and seconded staff⁵. From initial interviews with EUN, it is clear that key information has been shared mostly on an ad hoc basis, with limited debriefs or after-mission briefs between the EUN office and the seconded staff. The first formal and organised session initiated by EUN for **knowledge-sharing and networking** of seconded staff was recently conducted in January 2016 in Copenhagen, and focused on staff working with Ukraine crisis either deployed in-country, in Brussels/Vienna, or and in Russia. Seconded staff that are in key positions in relation to the Ukraine crisis, were invited to participate and share experiences in an internal seminar which explored broader perspectives on the crisis. The seminar intended to draw on knowledge and insight gained from the secondment missions in order to contribute to the EUN programme analysis and policy formulation. Furthermore, the seminar aimed to strengthen (or even establish) the network within seconded staff. By creating organised, learning and knowledge-sharing (expertise) opportunities for both the host agencies, seconded staff, and the EUN office, this event contributed to increased awareness of critical issues faced in the Neighbourhood Region, as well as opportunities for synergy and collective action between Denmark and the EU/international initiatives.

Making a difference and concrete value-added to critical mission objectives

A positive majority response regarding the secondments' contribution to mission objectives is worth mentioning. A significant majority (87%) of survey respondents felt that their secondment either "made a difference" or distinctly contributed to the mission at hand, even if some felt that their role could have been used more strategically. And 83% of respondents felt that the experience and knowledge they gained contributed to a concrete value-added to both the host organisation and achievement towards the mission's objectives to either a high or medium degree. One respondent noted that being part of an international presence in a conflict zone was very important and has tangible results, as even if the mission does not have an 'enforcing' (e.g., ceasefire) capacity, as regular monitoring can reduce the number of human rights violations.

However, those seconded in differing monitoring missions (e.g., SMM, OSCE) had diverse experiences as to the actual impact or success of the mission, as understood by the individual comments. It appeared that generally those seconded to missions with distinct task areas (as opposed to generalised monitoring) had better experiences and perceived success of their contribution and also of the mission itself (e.g., EULEX Kosovo, EEAS headquarters in Brussels, and UNHCR). A majority of the comments from those who questioned their mission objectives or contribution to the mission (13% of respondents), attributed the perceived failure to major issues with internal factors within the host organisation (e.g., serious management, political and bureaucratic obstacles) or external factors (such as crisis context, logistics, security). However, it is important to note that there was limited evidence from the programme document, the excel sheets of seconded staff from 2008-2016, and the small survey, in order to document tangible advancements towards EUN and the mission's objectives directly connected to each secondment post.

⁵ As stated previously, this type of communication could only happen in certain assignments based on the type of mission and rules of the host organisation.

Fulfilling key political obligations, sharing Danish expertise, and strengthening multilateral and bilateral relations

The most important reason (out of three primary reasons) for funding a secondment programme according to 62% of survey respondents, is to fulfil Denmark's key political obligations and actively support initiatives of international institutions⁶. The second key reason is politically and strategically related to first, to strengthen multilateral and bilateral relations between Denmark and international and national institutions. Half of survey respondents also felt that secondments were critical to capacity building of both multilateral and national institutions through sharing of Danish expertise and know-how, and at the same time expanded Danish influence over global, regional, and national processes, policies and programmes.

There were two reasons that most seconded staff did not see as a strategic rationale for the programme, namely contextual/political/intelligence information gathering (only 14% of respondents), and building capacity of seconded staff in order to prepare them for future leadership positions within the Danish foreign ministry or other multilateral operations (26%). This demonstrates both a perceived and real (in-practice) disconnect between the seconded staff and their mission/role, and the operations of the EUN office or the MFA as a whole. Furthermore, this reveals that seconded staff predominantly do not see their position in the host organisation as an extension of the Danish MFA, or as an opportunity to obtain and transmit intelligence or political information.

Learning on the job increased seconded staff capacity to input on both global/national and Danish foreign policies and programmes

Besides contributing to achieving mission objectives, the experience and knowledge gained in secondments contributed in some degree according to 87% of respondents, to increased capacity in one significant area - strategic networking with multilateral and national stakeholders and opportunities to input on the development of global/national policies and programmes. For example, one respondent noted that his comprehensive practical experience in facilitating peaceful conflict resolution and reconciliation has been useful for SMM operations at the ground level and for development of new strategies and mentoring/training other Monitoring Officers. Those surveyed also noted that the increased knowledge and information sharing opportunities from their secondment contributed to some degree (83%), of enhanced capacity of staff to develop new Danish foreign policies or programmes for the future. Respondents were quite mixed in terms of the learning's contribution to topics related to MFA operations and policy, such as deepened contextual understanding of Danish priorities and enhanced capacity to support or follow-up on MFA/embassy activities⁷. For both categories nearly half of respondents responded to a "low degree" or not at all. Interestingly the responses from the survey on this point were in direct contrast to interview discussions with the Danish Embassy in Kiev, Ukraine (June 2016). The embassy stated they have a better informed overview of what is happening in Ukraine, as well as the overall political situation, because of the insight provided by seconded staff to the EU delegation. They also felt that this critical knowledge exchange directly supported their core work and was especially useful in areas where there is a lack of resources (e.g., to follow up on the Crimea situation). It is difficult to precisely pinpoint what kind of information has led to better contextual understanding due to its sensitive nature, but for example information provided by the EU delegation secondments allowed for the Embassy (Ambassador) briefings to the Danish press and for high-level visits to be more precise, up to date, and insightful than

⁶ This also includes support the EU approximation processes and adoption of EU standards in the Neighbourhood countries, which was noted by 43% of respondents as a primary reason to use secondments.

⁷ Examples of activities provided in the survey were political advocacy, monitoring of funded projects, and partner relations.

otherwise would be the case. Consequently, the information exchange ensured that both the Danish public and VIP visitors (e.g., Danish PM) were better informed. Furthermore, access to analysis and insights at the EU level increased the range and depth of diplomatic issues that can be addressed in dialogue between Ukraine and Denmark, making the process richer and more valuable.

The most mixed response was regarding the learning's contribution to increased knowledge of EU standards, procedures and policies. Although 37% of respondents felt that the mission contributed a high degree of learning on EU operations, of those surveyed almost equal fourths responded medium and low degrees, and not at all (23%). Several explanations for the diverse response in this case could be differences in types of mission and host organisations, geographic location (headquarters vs. in the field), as well as the host organisation's relationship with the EU. For example, one staff seconded to the OSCE SMM in the Ukraine responded that his mission activities and learning neither contributed at all to any of the areas mentioned above, or to MFA and EUN programmatic objectives.

Overall positive contribution of the secondment to personal growth and career

In general, all respondents felt that the assignment (during and afterwards) contributed to their personal growth and career in varying degrees and capacity areas. Furthermore, nearly all surveyed staff (97% to a great or medium degree) responded that the secondment was both professionally and personally rewarding⁸. A large majority of those surveyed had two primary reasons why they felt "to a great degree" that the secondment contributed to their career:

- a) It gave them a broader base of knowledge; and,
- b) It helped them to better navigate sensitive and political situations.

A large majority of seconded staff also found that the assignment fostered personal growth in their expertise area. One respondent noted that the experience was extremely rich in learning and personal development, and mentioned the following examples of enhanced skill areas: manoeuvring within international governmental organisations and cross-cultural cooperation with people from other states; diplomacy; dealing with crisis; and peace-building.

The career trajectory after secondments is uncertain

When it came to the contribution of secondments to future career opportunities and senior positions within the MFA or multilateral institutions, the responses were much more mixed. Less than 50% of those surveyed felt that the assignment prepared them ("to a great degree") for more senior positions, and nearly none (only 1) stated that after the secondment, they were able to acquire a key leadership position in the MFA or a multilateral institution. A large majority of respondents (80%) even stated that they were either not able to get a leadership position, or that the question was not applicable to their case. Several written comments to this question clarified and provided isolated explanations for some of these responses. The first example was that often the secondment programme funded either a JPO or a very senior position and consequently the **lack of mid-level assignments** made it difficult to continue and follow a progressive career trajectory in this area of foreign service. A related example is that the situation differs greatly depending on at which point the seconded staff is, within his/her career. One respondent noted that he got staffed on a secondment at a very late point in his career, which of course limited the extent to which it could influence his future career path, and another similarly responded that he went on pension after his assignment.

⁸ Only one of the seconded staff surveyed responded that the assignment had not been rewarding at all.