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Abstract

The purpose of this work is to determine whether MFAs change their in-firm training for mid-career diplomats and if theories and concepts of the private sector are able to explain such changes. Therefore, this research consists of two parts; a descriptive and an empirical one. Based on literature research, the first part of the paper describes the historical evolution that diplomatic training has undergone. Afterwards, it will provide a rough overview of the current training situation of sixteen Central European MFAs. Their completed questionnaires show, that they are in the process of adapting their training to the developments of the 21st century. The second part of the paper then further examines the in-firm training situations of the Austrian and the Finnish MFA and compares them to the developments in the private sector. The comparison shows that, up to a certain degree, the theories and concepts of the private sector are also transferable to the context of training mid-career diplomats; however, it also indicates that MFAs follow different approaches. The Austrian MFA, for instance, only starts introducing blended learning arrangements, while the Finnish MFA already heads towards enabling organizational learning. Furthermore, this research shows that both MFAs do not fully exhaust the available possibilities that technology offers for learning contexts, especially in regard to social learning and informal learning opportunities, which is a possible explanation for the seeming advancement of the training in the private sector. Nevertheless, the study also proves that the reputation of training mid-career diplomats increased over the last few years.

Abstrakt

Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es herauszufinden, ob sich die firmeninterne Weiterbildung von Diplomaten an die Entwicklungen des 21. Jahrhunderts anpasst und wenn ja, ob man diese Veränderungen anhand der Theorien und Konzepte der Privatwirtschaft erklären kann. Dazu gliedert sich diese Arbeit in einen deskriptiven und einem empirischen Teil. Auf Basis einer Literaturrecherche und eines selbsterstellten Fragebogens gibt der erste Teil der Arbeit zunächst einen historischen Überblick über die Entwicklung der Weiterbildungsangebote und stellt im Folgenden die Situation der firmeninternen Weiterbildung in 16 zentraleuropäischen Ländern dar. Zusammenfassend lässt sich festhalten, dass alle Länder seit der vierten industriellen Revolution ihre Weiterbildungsprogramme angepasst haben, und dies auch weiterhin vorhaben. Der zweite Teil der Arbeit widmet sich den Weiterbildungsangeboten des österreichischen und des finnischen Außenministeriums. Durch einen Vergleich dieser Angebote – sowohl miteinander als auch gegenüber den Entwicklungen des privaten Sektors – zeigt sich, dass sich die Konzepte und Theorien aus der Privatwirtschaft grundsätzlich auch auf öffentliche Organisationen transferieren lassen. Der Vergleich macht außerdem deutlich, dass die Außenministerien unterschiedliche Herangehensweisen bei den Anpassungen ihrer Weiterbildungen haben. Generell scheinen Außenministerien aber weder das Potenzial von technologischen Entwicklungen für den Lernkontext auszuschöpfen, noch soziales und informelles Lernen zu fördern.

*The fate of nations very often hangs on the judicious conduct of a diplomatist.
His success depends almost entirely in the confidence and esteem which he inspires.*

Murray (1856, 43-44)

Table of Contents

Table of Figures	V
List of Tables	V
List of Abbreviations.....	VI
1. Introduction.....	7
2. The Training of Diplomats	11
2.1. Methodology.....	11
2.2. The Evolution of Diplomatic Training.....	13
2.2.1. Ancient Times	14
2.2.2. Medieval Times	15
2.2.3. Modern Times	17
2.3. Training Mid-Career Diplomats in the 21 st Century.....	20
2.3.1. Future Intentions.....	25
2.3.2. Overall Developments	27
3. Theory.....	35
3.1. Literature Review	36
3.1.1. Implications of the Organizational Context.....	37
3.1.2. Implications of the Organizational Culture	40
3.1.3. Implications of the Organization's Adaptability	43
3.2. Theoretical Framework.....	45
3.3. Research Design.....	53
3.3.1. Case Selection.....	55
3.3.2. Methodology	57
4. Empirical Study.....	59
4.1. Contextual Information.....	59
4.2. Training's reputation.....	61
4.3. Learning Cultures	64
4.4. MFAs' Adaptability.....	69
4.5. Evaluation and Results	73
5. Conclusion and Outlook	78
Bibliography.....	82
Appendix	88
Pledge of Honesty	129

Table of Figures

Figure 1: The Evolution of Diplomatic Work	13
Figure 2: Changes in the Training of Mid-Career Diplomats since 2000	23
Figure 3: Intended Changes in the Training of Mid-Career Diplomats	25
Figure 4: Offered Types of Obligation for Training Mid-Career Diplomats	29
Figure 5: Expected Challenges for Changes in the Training of Mid-Career Diplomats	32
Figure 6: Providers of the Communication Channels for Diplomats within their MFA.....	33
Figure 7: Assessment by the MFA on the Exchanges between their Diplomats.....	34
Figure 8: The Sweet Spot of Learning.....	50
Figure 9: Stages of Developments in the In-Firm Training	64
Figure 10: The In-Firm Training Development Stage of the Austrian and the Finnish MFA	67
Figure 11: The Organization of the Austrian MFA.....	127
Figure 12: The Organization of the Finnish MFA.....	128

List of Tables

Table 1: Training Situation for Mid-Career Diplomats	22
Table 2: Other Intended Changes in the Training of Mid-Career Diplomats	27
Table 3: Overview of Current Training Practices for Mid-Career Diplomats	28
Table 4: Content of Personnel Development Strategies	48
Table 5: Values for Agile Learning	51
Table 6: Comparison of the current practices in the Austrian MFA and the Finnish MFA	56
Table 7: Comparison of the training changes in the Austrian MFA and the Finnish MFA	56
Table 8: Intended other changes by the Finnish MFA.....	57
Table 9: Characteristics of Resident Ambassadors by countries.....	89

List of Abbreviations

AAD	The American Academy of Diplomacy
BMEIA	Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs
CE	Common Era time period
CEI	Central European Initiative
DA	Vienna School of International Studies
DAFCO	Diplomatic Academy of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office
DDO	Deliberately Developmental Organizations
DV	Dependent Variable
EEAS	European External Action Service
FSO	Foreign Service Officer
IO	International Organization
IV	Independent Variable
MDSD	Most Dissimilar Systems Design
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
MSSD	Most Similar Systems Design
OPM	Organizational Process Model
PD	Personnel Development
RAM	Rational Actor Model
SDT	Self-Determination Theory
SME	Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threads
UniSA	University of South Australia
VUCA World	Volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world

1. Introduction

*A profession that stands still for its portrait in our rapidly changing world
... runs risk of becoming a still life.*

Oglesby (2015, 32)

A profession must adapt to its changing environment if it wants to stay relevant. The introductory statement was made by Ms Oglesby in the context of diplomatic work and chosen as the opening of this research since it addresses its key essence.

The fast-paced developments nowadays influence the work of diplomats; therefore, many scholars study how and why diplomacy is changing. However, this paper will examine how the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFAs) deal with these changes in regard to their training and learning processes¹. Hence, it will not only look at the current learning culture mid-career diplomats are facing and if they are changing, but also try to explain the MFAs' reactions to the diplomat's changing work environment in their personnel development (PD) strategies by performing a small-n comparison in the second part of the paper.

Mr James (1980) described diplomacy as “the conduct of relations between sovereign states through the medium of accredited representatives ... and the use of those representatives to advance the interests of the appointing state.” (936) This definition was published in the Journal *International Relations* in 1980, and it is still a valid definition. He deliberately wrote it broad and fundamentally, to highlight the fact that its mediums and the used methods vary and depend on the specific contexts. (936) While Mr James portrayal of the nature of diplomacy holds across time, its processes and participants faced many changes and still are. However, such changes used to take a considerable amount of time, but with the fast-paced developments our world is facing nowadays, the duration of such transition processes shorten.

¹ This paper focuses on the in-firm training situation and largely ignores external training opportunities. Therefore, it refers to the internal company context when talking about training; otherwise, it will be explicitly mentioned.

Scholars mostly focus on the selection process and the initial training programmes when investigating the education of diplomats. These two factors were the essential determinants of a country's effectiveness in foreign relations for a long time. However, nowadays, also adequate training on the job becomes more and more important.

Diplomats have to learn how to incorporate new tasks into their 'normal' working day ever more rapidly, and this requires them to become familiar and confident with them in a timely fashion. This means they do not only have to be able to understand how to use the respective technology or strategy but also – and that is much more important – understand how it works in terms of implications and effects. They have to be aware of the possible impacts their usage can have and what they have to be careful about.

If this trend of acceleration continues, then agility will become even more important. For the preparation of diplomats, this means that a tough selection process and appropriate initial training is not anymore sufficient. Their work tasks are likely to change within a few years, and diplomats should be able to have access to adequate training possibilities that help and prepare them for it. Therefore, the prevailing learning culture within an MFA is crucial and technological enhancements open up new techniques and opportunities to configure and optimize in-firm training, especially for organizations like MFAs, where the employees are spread all over the world.

The goal of this paper is to take up the topic of mid-career training and to carry out a basic research that determines firstly, whether MFAs recognized the relevance of that topic, and secondly, why they administer the mid-career training the way they do. As a point of reference, the paper will use the fourth industrial revolution and therefore focus this analysis on the last 20 years, the beginning of the 21st century. Additionally, since the initial training programmes are very different, not only in their theoretical or practical nature but also in their durations, this research will not use a designated amount of years in service that automatically determines whether a diplomat is in his or her mid-career or not. Alternatively, this paper considers diplomats to be in their mid-career once they completed their respective initial training.

Since countries generally administer their foreign affairs differently, their structures, organizations, and processes vary greatly; consequently, they also have different approaches in their selection and appointment processes for their diplomats. Mr Kralev (2018), the

founding director of the Washington International Diplomatic Academy, argues in the New York Times that in some countries, there are still “appointees who receive diplomatic posts thanks only to political connections.” He claims that global diplomacy is ineffective because the professionalism of diplomacy has not yet been recognized everywhere, and even if countries did so, their foreign service seldom recognized the role proper training plays for their development. (Kralev 2018)

To resolve at least some of the many conflicts, disputes and other problems of the world, governments must start building or strengthening professional diplomatic services, providing them with proper training and career development, and giving them all the tools, resources and authority necessary to get the job done. (Kralev 2018)

Mr Kralev’s article states the relevance of diplomats’ training. This research will not only try to examine whether Central European countries recognized that, but also how their PD currently look like for diplomats.

The focus on Central Europe originates not only from the long professional history in diplomacy but also from the newly developed European External Action Service (EEAS) and the resulting discussion on how it should be organized. Scholars, as well as practitioners, are writing studies and papers on how the EEAS should arrange its training. This shows that the learning and training environment is considered to be an essential part of fostering staff and European diplomats, that keep the interests of all of Europe in mind and that have a common culture.

The emerging relevance of this discussion should be used by MFAs and scholars to conduct their own research, expand their knowledge, find best practices, and start discourses – not only on the EU-level but also domestically. Thus, this paper sent a questionnaire about the domestic training situations for mid-career diplomats to the EU member countries. However, to potentially increase the sample size’s number of responses further countries that closely collaborate with the Union - such as Norway, Switzerland and the recently exited UK - were contacted and asked to participate in the survey as well. The goal of this basic research is to put together a rough overview of the current situations that not only gathers all the information but can also be used as a starting point for further research.

Furthermore, as mentioned above, it is undeniable that jobs are changing, especially in times of digitalization. However, this seems to be even more obvious in the private sector than

in the field of diplomacy. A possible explanation for the different paces of change in the two sectors could be the very fact that the firms' successes and survivals are not ensured. In the private sector, especially in the context of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME), change is the only constant. If firms do not stay ahead of time and keep optimizing and innovating, somebody else will take over – not only on an organizational level but also on the individual one. In the public sector; however, this competition seems to be – at least in some areas – slightly defused. Diplomats, for instance, are relatively secure, once they passed the entrance exam, and precisely this feeling of safety could also lead to a reluctance towards change and therewith hinder adaptation and innovation. Therefore, this research will also analyze whether there are similarities the developments in the private sector.

For this purpose, it will not only look at the current situation but start with providing a rough overview of the historical evolution of the diplomat. This retrospect is necessary to understand how diplomatic work has developed into what it is today and why it varies in different countries. Moreover, it also helps with putting the MFA's future plans for PDs into perspective.

2. The Training of Diplomats

Diplomacy has a long history; actually, quoting Bjola and Kornprobst (2019) “the origins of diplomacy lay with the first decisions of human communities to reach an understanding with their neighbours...” (13). However, as Mr James (1980) stated correctly, the scopes, tools and methods of such interactions changed immensely since its commencements.

Training, in general, depends on the work tasks that have to be completed. The sole reason of providing further education to employees is to help them become more efficient and beneficial to the organization. This explains why it is natural that the content of training adapts if work tasks itself changes. However, technical enhancements and scientific findings regarding the learning process elucidate why the used mediums and methodologies are changing too. Both developments have to be considered when looking at the current learning situation of mid-career diplomats. Moreover, historic developments disclose why “objectives, methods employed, responsibilities, influence and power of diplomats have ... been far from universal.” (Bjola and Kornprobst 2019, 13) Depending on the governing systems diplomats had importance and therewith more or fewer responsibilities; also, the geographical situation impacted diplomatic practices and its developments. (Bjola and Kornprobst 2019, 13) These influences, in turn, affected the requirements for their training configuration.

Hence, this chapter will start with a brief overview of the evolution of the diplomatic world itself before talking about the developments in training. The paper will try to go into more detail when talking about the most recent developments in the training of diplomats. As mentioned above, it will focus on the learning situation that mid-career diplomats of Central European countries are facing nowadays. Furthermore, it will try to compile a rough outline of the MFAs’ future plans for the training environment of their mid-career diplomats.

2.1. Methodology

This descriptive research will be based on the findings of a literature research in combination with the gathered information from the by the MFAs completed questionnaires. As mentioned above, the sample for the interviews will consist of professionalized diplomatic

services only. Altogether thirty Central European countries were contacted; however, expectedly not everybody answered. The focus will be on the MFAs that responded to the inquiry and thus provided some internal information that helps to gain a better insight.

The research design is a mixture between an inductive and a deductive one. Partly it analyses existing theories; however, it is also looking for new theories that emerge from the descriptive analysis, especially from the collected primary data received through the completed questionnaires.

The study compares training situations over time and between the MFAs in order to better assess the overall role PD plays. It will foremost concentrate on the last 20 years; this way it considers a few years that preceded the so-called fourth industrial revolution, on which many researchers pin the reason for the need of changing in-firm PD. Implementing changes in training may take some time, and it can very well be the case that an MFA is in the process of putting together a new concept for training their mid-career diplomats; therefore, it is crucial to look at the overall vision of the MFAs. That is why the comparison will also consider future plans² so that the overall strategy gets visible and averts the derivation of wrong conclusions.

This research's primary purpose will be to give a mere overview of the countries and whether they changed their in-firm training configurations, or plan to do so. However, it may also serve as an indicator of how they changed the training for their diplomats. Nevertheless, due to the limited scope of the paper, this overview will not be able to include, discuss, or evaluate in-depth information on the MFAs intentions, motives, and strategies. Hence, when comparing the way MFAs change their training one has to keep in mind that this is not the aim of the study and that the results might not be accurate enough to make a statement on it. Though, the results then form the starting point for the second part of the paper that tries to answer the cause-effect relationship of why in-firm training is developing this way.

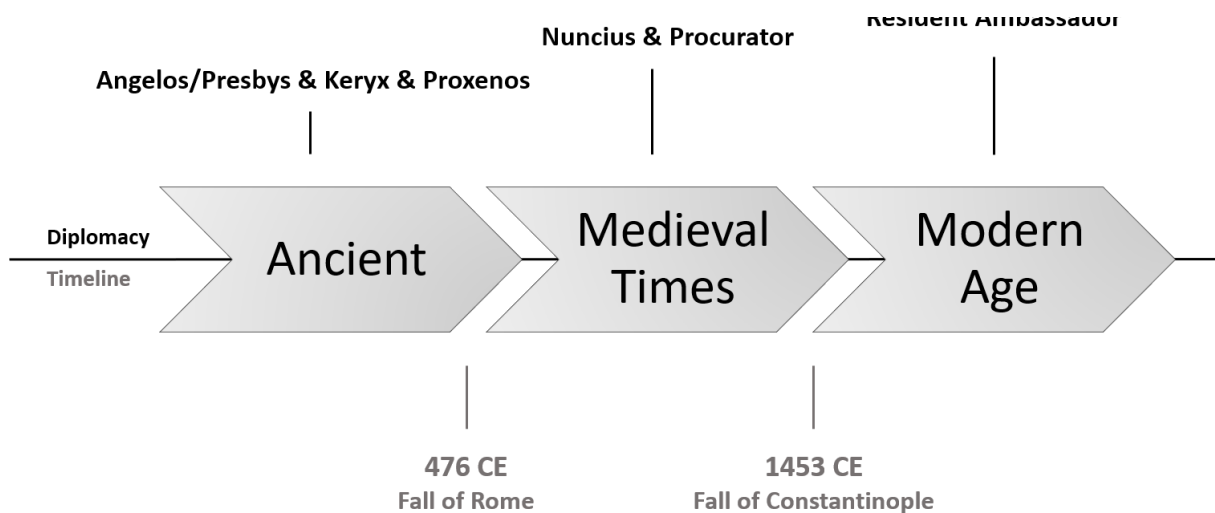
² Due to the scope of the paper, there will be no distinction between short- and long-term plans for the MFAs.

2.2. The Evolution of Diplomatic Training

Even though diplomatic work goes back to the dawn of history, diplomats – as we know them today – are a relatively recent appearance that can be traced back to ancient Greece. However, there were still quite substantial differences in their scopes of duties. In general, diplomatic work has undergone three different stages of development since then. The chronological allocation of these evolvments is quite similar to Cellarius' *Historia Universalis*, which is tripartite into ancient, medieval, and modern times.

The events that distinguish those three periods are the fall of the Western Roman Empire and the fall of Constantinople (Leuschner 1957). Therefore, as agreed upon by historians, constitutes the fall of Rome in the year 476 CE, the end of ancient times (Wasson 2018). It is followed by the medieval times, which again with the fall of another empire – the Byzantine Empire. In 1453 CE, Constantinople fell (Cartwright 2018) and with it, the medieval period ended, and the modern age began. These delimitations correspond to the three stages of diplomatic work, as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1: The Evolution of Diplomatic Work



Source: Own representation based on Bjola and Kornprobst (2019, 33)

The different designations for the diplomatic envoys already show that their tasks and assignments differed and, as already mentioned above, the requirements to the diplomatic envoy always adapt to the occurring work tasks. Therefore, not only the qualifications needed to become a diplomatic envoy changed but later on also their learning and training situation.

2.2.1. Ancient Times

The first trailblazers of today's diplomats were the Angelos or Presbys, Keryx, and Proxenos. However, their work looked very different, and they often did not have any special rights and mostly lacked protection (Bjola and Kornprobst 2019, 15). Box 1 provides a rough description of the three types of diplomatic envoys.

Box 1:

Angelos or Presbys

This type of diplomats mostly had missions that were not only rather concise but also quite precise. Since determining the strategies of the sending country was usually a rather public act, the instructions were rather detailed, extensive, and specific. Therefore, negotiation skills and suaveness were not considered decisive selection criteria. It was much more important for them to perform well oratorically in front of the host countries' councils and to be well respected, wise, and considered a mature person. (Bjola and Kornprobst 2019, 15)

Keryx

Such diplomats were *heralds*, meaning they were messengers and announcers of importance. However, in contrast to a simple herald, a keryx were able to enjoy a higher feeling of personal safety due to some exclusive rights. (Bjola and Kornprobst 2019, 15) About their selection process, not a lot of information can be found; yet, it can be assumed that similar qualities as of Angelos or Presbys were desired.

Proxenos

This type of envoys were people who stayed at home while acting for the other state. They serve either because of their feeling of affinity to the culture of the other state or because of the affection of its political system. Proxenos were key figures in the facilitation of inter-state negotiations and the source of information and advice on the domestic situation in the state of which they were representatives. In general, their tasks included protecting the nationals of the represented state in their home countries, supporting them by taking care of their legal affairs, as well as increasing the exchange between the two countries in terms of trade and retailing. During good times they were responsible for influencing public policy that concerns political and cultural aspects as well as commerce. In bad times their focus would be to offer visitors, which are from the state they represent, assistance and hospitality. (Bjola and Kornprobst 2019, 15, 256)

When looking at the work tasks of Angelos or Presbys and Keryx, it is apparent that their personality traits and oral competences qualified them for the job. Once they learned how their work looks like and what they are allowed to do, there is no further training required since they will always get very concrete assignments. The work of a Proxenos, whereas, seems to differ from the others. Though, they still do not seem to need specific training after their initial orientation, because the tasks itself did not change significantly. However, they always have to be up to date in regard to current developments and happenings; therefore, one could actually argue that they had to learn continuously about the other country. This aspect of staying on top of the developments did not disappear at all; if, then its scope even increased with the growing number of actors in diplomacy, the globalization, and international organizations (IOs).

2.2.2. Medieval Times

The diplomacy of the Medieval Times was quite inconsistent and heterogeneous. However, when Christianity increased in the whole of Europe, their political systems started to converge as it had similar basic understandings. Furthermore, out of the convergence of canon and Roman law, a European understanding of diplomacy emerged and started to become professionalized over time. The origin of the diplomatic methods that prevailed is believed to be in the Byzantine Empire. From there it spread via Italy to France and Spain and eventually over all Europe. (Bjola and Kornprobst 2019, 20)

According to Bjola and Kornprobst (2019), there were two types of envoys during the Medieval Times (see figure 1). Initially, there was only the Nuncius; however, he soon became insufficient. With the growing interaction between the European states, the need for rather rapid communication between the principles and the use of such *living letters* was time inefficient and faulty. Therefore, the procurator emerged together with the unification movement. (20-21) Box 2 provides a short description of the two.

Box 2:**Nuncius**

They are referred to as *living letters* since they mainly just delivered messages from one ruler to another. They were preferred over actual letters since they were not only able to respond to statements and questions but also to use the intended terms of expressions. Furthermore, it was agreed upon that a nuncius had immunity. If he had been harmed, it would have been a direct attack on his principle. Therefore, these envoys were also sent in bad times and times of war, e.g. for ending relations, getting in touch with alliances to coordinate, or to declare war. Though, it is crucial to know that they were not allowed to make decisions and agreements on their own since they did not enjoy the privilege of having full powers. (Bjola and Kornprobst 2019, 20-21, 253)

Procurator

In contrast to a nuncius, a procurator had full powers and therewith was able to conclude agreements and contracts for their leaders without having to go back and forth to obtain consent. (Bjola and Kornprobst 2019, 32)

As mentioned above, the Byzantium Empire played an essential role in the development of the described procedures in the European diplomatic system. Moreover, it also was a pioneer in the training aspect of diplomatic envoys. According to Bjola and Kornprobst (2019), Mr Sofer argues the following:

The Byzantium Empire was, perhaps, the first to institutionalize the training of diplomatic envoys, who were recruited and carefully trained to understand and honour manners and customs of their hosts, to observe situations abroad and report back to their sovereign, as well as negotiate terms with their hosts. (23)

This would mean that the birth of training diplomatic envoys and advancing their job-relevant skills only emerged during the Medieval Times. The fact that the institutionalization of the training took several centuries of diplomatic relations shows that it did not seem relevant up to that point. However, when the peaceful interaction between states started to increase, the Byzantium Empire started to recognize the value of well-trained envoys and what impact they can have on international relations.

Worth mentioning in this context is that during this time also trade increased dramatically, which led - along with other reasons - to the development of the separate system of the consular. (Bjola and Kornprobst 2019, 21)

2.2.3. Modern Times

The demands on the diplomatic envoys changed together with the newly established international system of the Modern Age. Mr Pfusterschmid-Hardtenstein (2008) argues that rulers wanted to gain more and more political and economic influence beyond their borders, which was mostly achieved by making use of marriage-policy and their accompanying contracts of succession. For this purpose, they had to choose the right aristocrats, that could represent their interests suitably. (9) However, the developments of the 15th century also lead to the establishment of a so-called resident ambassador (see box 3).

Box 3:

Resident Ambassador

The resident ambassador was responsible for collecting all the relevant information on domestic developments to determine the best course of action and how to proceed. Therefore, they were well acclimatized in the host country and not only knew about potential political intrigues that could emerge but were also able to intervene them in favour of the home countries intentions. In their reports, they were supposed to write every detail so that the people back home could identify important developments or connections that the ambassador might have overseen. However, there were two main changes to earlier diplomatic envoys. Firstly, resident ambassadors often were no longer that dependent on the host countries' hospitality, but it became common that the home country took care of their accommodation and so forth. Secondly, they had more freedom in adapting and deciding on their course of action on an ad hoc basis. (Bjola and Kornprobst 2019, 25, 27, 257)

The combination of the development towards a territorial-sovereign state system and the growing fragmentation of the role of religion led to a rather continuous handling of diplomacy in Europe. Additionally, the dechristianization lifted the geographical limitation of European diplomatic practice and enabled its transfer to the non-Western world. The institutionalization of diplomacy furthermore increased the prestige ambassadors received, which not only enabled them to operate more efficiently but also started to professionalize the work of a diplomatic envoy. (Bjola and Kornprobst 2019, 24; Pfusterschmid-Hardtenstein 2008, 9)

Therefore, some countries soon established a common point of collection. In 1626 France was the first to set up an MFA under Cardinal Richelieu, who also argued that it is essential to not only choose, train and observe but also intervene if ambassadors exceed or violate their powers. (Bjola and Kornprobst 2019, 26)

Despite the similar developments, European countries still followed quite different strategies in terms of the organization of their diplomatic staff. On the one hand, there were different attitudes toward the background of the people³, and on the other hand, there was no uniform approach of how to prepare and train the chosen ones. However, “Gradually, it became increasingly plain that the skills of the resident diplomat were a crucial asset.” (Bjola and Kornprobst 2019, 25) In the 18th century, the first institutions that concentrated on the training of diplomats opened (Guedes 2008, 25). Two school formats, the French and the Austrian emerged from it that are still representable for the two approaches of diplomatic training - although much in common. Both “aimed, above all, at equipping their apprentices with social alacrity, cultural promptness, and manners” (Guedes 2008, 27). However, as mentioned above, they had significant differences in their approaches:

- **The French style**

In the French training of the foreign service, they used a rather academical style that heavily relied on previous methods of successful ministers. Therefore, it was a rather bureaucratic training style, where students read, analyzed, discussed, and evaluated the documents available. By doing this, students were supposed to learn the advantages and disadvantages of those

³ In Europe, countries used people from various social classes for their diplomatic staff. Appendix A shows table 9, which lists five exemplary states and an overview of their characteristics – their descents and how they are portrayed according to Bjola and Kornprobst (2019).

tactics. However, with this strategy, they did not pay attention to the historical context but simply assumed that those methods would stay successful. (Guedes 2008, 28-29)

- **The Austrian style**

Guedes (2008) argues that the Austrian way of training was more modern compared to the French one; he describes it as follows:

It was a composite, or hybrid, training, anchored, not as in Universities, on theoretical discussions and outlooks, but rather on the interactions of factors crucial for the dynamics of real-world contemporary issues – although, of course, suitably theoretical in reach so as to ensure that new emergent realities could be readily understood by the diplomatic student-professional.
(31)

Therefore, it professionalized the work of diplomatic envoys and focused on teaching its students to think critically (Guedes 2008, 31).

Needless to say, that those apprenticeships are mostly concentrating on diplomats initial training phase and not so much on their mid-career training. Both formats seem like they were intended to teach them all the necessary skills and methods so that, if needed, they can, later on, learn everything independently. However, with the growing inter-connection and the technological developments, “diplomacy started to take on new imperatives, it acquired new meanings and unexpected dimensions” (Guedes 2008, 17). New technologies and techniques emerged as well as new players started to enter the international stage. Multilateral work increased with the establishment of IOs and diplomatic staff had to adapt to the new settings and be able to represent their home countries adequately in such new settings. “The proliferation of issue areas and actors in global politics also puts pressure on diplomats to constantly update their repertoire of skills ... or with respect to their ability to show initiative and provide leadership.” (Bjola and Kornprobst 2019, 187) Such developments point out the need for a newly configured learning and training environment for diplomats. Therefore, “with the resulting reorientations, diplomatic practice has acquired new strategies and a new mechanism, both aimed at the constitution of the professional managers which international life needed” (Guedes 2008, 17).

2.3. Training Mid-Career Diplomats in the 21st Century

Beginning with the presentation of Woodrow Wilsons' 14 points, the need for a more transparent decision-making and negotiation process became apparent. This measure of opening up diplomatic work to the public should reinforce democracy and help with preserving peace. (Guedes 2008, 41) This demand for transparency increased over time, especially since the existing technology allows for it without having to go through much trouble. However, regarding the use of technology in diplomacy, Bjola and Kornprobst (2019) advocate the following prediction:

Digital diplomacy is likely to penetrate the deep core of the diplomatic DNA if technological acceleration is seen by MFAs as an opportunity for ecosystem-based, pro-active and network-oriented adaptation. If, on the other hand, digitization fails to restrain emotional contagion, algorithmic determinism and policy fragmentation, then MFAs will likely slow down their efforts of integration of digital technologies in their work. (192)

On a historical point of view, technological development already changed the core of diplomacy. Guedes argued already in 2008 that “diplomacy started to take on new imperatives, it acquired new meanings and unexpected dimensions and it found itself impelled ... to incorporate new techniques and take into account the importance of novel technologies that had meanwhile emerged.” (17) Interfering technological advancements already started in the 60s and 70s; however, they had a low in the 90s. Since then, the pace of developments started to increase more and more. (Guedes 2008, 17)

With the emergence of these new technologies, the growing interconnection, and the demand for transparency, it becomes essential to prepare diplomats for such changes. Historically, diplomatic education and training “operated as if through osmosis” (Guedes 2008, 17); however, over time, this started to disappear. If they did not change until the recent past, they are in the process of redesigning and adapting their training nowadays. Nevertheless, there are still some obstacles to the process; time is a crucial variable, next to the undervalued status. As in any occupation, it is hard to find time for training employees since this means they will not be actively working during the learning sessions. For diplomats,

there is also the trade-off between their bureaucratic-administrative task requirements and their need for learning and training sessions. On the one hand, MFAs do not want to take their diplomats away from their work but on the other hand, improving their skills could make their overall efficiency much higher and help them to understand and use the available tools better. (Guedes 2008, 17, 20-21)

Since these reflections above lack of empirical evidence, 30 questionnaires were sent out to Central European MFAs and sixteen of them sent it back filled out⁴ (see appendixes B and C). By collecting primary data, this research wants to get a more practically oriented overview and understanding of the situation within the MFAs.

Even though this questionnaire is supposed to be the main source of information for describing the current training situation mid-career diplomats are facing, it was kept to a minimum intentionally. The questions are short and ask for rather general information since this should increase the response rate, and in the context of this research, it is more important to gather information from as many countries as possible. Furthermore, it is important to note that all the indicators asked for are subjective; therefore, the answers are not comparable as such. Some countries may consider a slight adaption as change, whereas others may only acknowledge the implementation of a whole new system as change. However, the collected information is still valuable since it solely wants to show whether some efforts are made at all.

Table 1 beneath provides an overview of the collected data from the questionnaires. Even though by far not every country responded, as already anticipated, it is still significant. During the chosen timeframe, all MFAs who answered the questionnaires claim that their overall training for mid-career diplomats has been subject to changes. This result proves that the hypothesis concerning the need for adapting the learning situation to stay relevant and effective is to a certain degree correct. However, it is not clear to what extent it can be verified. The fact that the results for the overall change is uniform and has no exceptions invites to overgeneralize. Also, the example of the UK demonstrably shows that change is happening there, despite not being able to answer during the crisis. Some published papers and articles that reflect upon newly tested methods and institutions; for instance, Davies'

⁴ Even though the response rate was only 18/30, the rate of acceptance was high since all, but two of them sent back the completed questionnaire. The reason given for the refusal by the two MFAs was a lack of capacity due to the COVID-19 crisis.

(2015) article *The Diplomatic Academy: A First for Britain's Foreign Office*, proves that they are changing their in-firm training environment for mid-career diplomats fundamentally. Nevertheless, since not every country answered, it cannot be said with certainty that all Central European MFAs are changing their learning environment for mid-career diplomats, especially since this type of data collection may have generated a sample selection bias. The collection and the compilation of an overview possibly incentivized MFAs, who are actively dealing with the in-firm training, to answer but discouraged the others.

Table 1: Training Situation for Mid-Career Diplomats

	Overall	In the Contents	In the Medium	In Obligations	Other changes	Adaption to I4.0*	Overall	In the Content	In the Medium	In Obligations	Other changes	Limited Resources	Undervalued Role	Diplomats' willingness	Bureaucracies	Others
	Active Changes since 2000						Planned future Changes					Expected Challenges				
Austria	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Belgium	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Croatia	✓	✓			✓		✓			✓			✓	✓		
Czechia	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓				✓		
Estonia	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓				✓				
Finland	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				
France	✓		✓		?		✓	✓	✓		✓					
Ireland	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓					✓
Italy	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓								✓
Luxembourg	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓				
Portugal	✓	✓	✓	✓	?		✓	✓		✓				✓		
Romania	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	
Slovakia	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		
Slovenia	✓			✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	
Sweden	✓	✓	✓		?		✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	
Switzerland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				

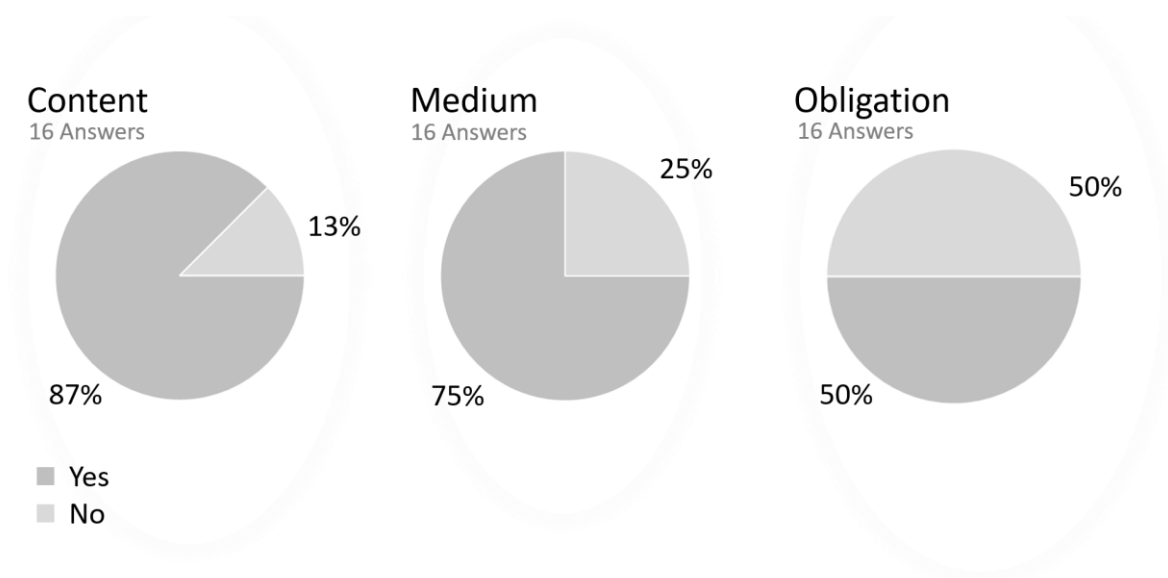
* I4.0 = Industry 4.0

Source: Own representation based on the completed questionnaires (see appendix C)

The overview shows that for each country from the sample change is happening in the training environment, they provide their mid-career diplomats; however, the results are not congruent. The questionnaire did not only ask for the content of their training sessions but

also their used mediums and their obligational aspects.⁵ Table 1 shows quite clearly that on a more detailed level, there are differences in the approaches of the individual MFAs in these areas; but there can still be overall observations derived from it. Figure 2, for instance, provides an overview of the undertaken changes since the fourth industrial revolution.

Figure 2: Changes in the Training of Mid-Career Diplomats since 2000



Source: Own representation based on the completed questionnaires (see appendix C)

When comparing the areas that have undergone changes in the last 20 years, the most common seems to be the content, closely followed by the used mediums. However, obligational changes have only happened in half of the surveyed MFAs. Furthermore, when asked about other changes that have been made, only one country has reported modifications in an unlisted category. Estonia mentioned that they “adjust yearly training plan accordingly” to the identified training needs by adding “New themes and practice in departments” (Estonian MFA 2020, see appendix C.e.).

Only in the middle of the 90s, online learning or e-learning became common (Zawacki-Richter 2013, 70). Therefore, when putting it into the chronological context and taking into account that diplomatic education is considered to often not being up-to-date, the

⁵ The obligational aspect is about whether training sessions are compulsory or voluntary.

results show that the changes are at least connected with, if not caused by, technological developments and innovations. Furthermore, these reactions may confirm the scholars, who argue that it is essential for MFAs to keep adapting to the changing circumstances if they want to stay relevant and practical.

It is important to keep in mind that the provided information is not an objective comparison and has to be treated with caution. MFAs gave subjective feedback on whether changes in that area have been made in this time frame, but the questionnaire never defined indicators that had to be met in order for it to count. Apart from that, when looking at the medium, it is also crucial to keep in mind that there is the possibility that an MFA, who denied changes in that area, already upgraded and adapted its training situation ahead of 2000. Therefore, it may very well be that they are on the same digital level as another MFA who ticked the box in the questionnaire.

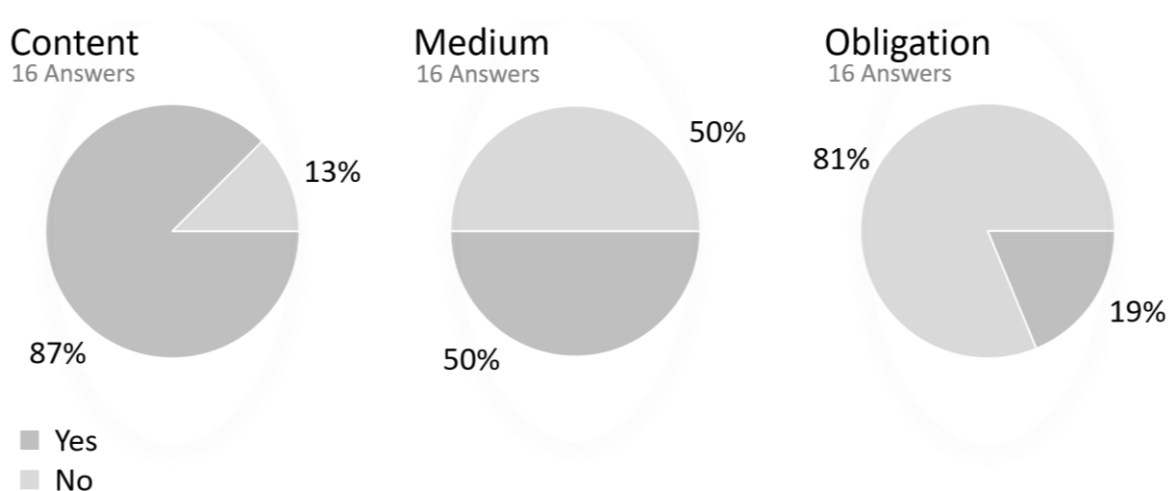
Regarding the adaptation to the fourth industrial revolution, it was quite surprising that not every country answered with yes. One possible explanation could be the framing of the question. In the survey, the formulation was asking about a completed process, maybe the two countries who did not answer it at all were unsure where their current state of adaption would fit in. Unfortunately, they did not make use of the comment boxes to justify their abstention. However, Belgium argued that their main problem for adapting to the industry 4.0 is the security issue. In the questionnaire, they stated that “ICT-security is a real challenge and is holding back the use of up to date technology.” (Belgian MFA 2020, see appendix C.b.) Italy commented that “While a systematic effort to adapt to industry 4.0 has not yet been undertaken, there is a growing awareness of the need for lifelong training for diplomats.” (Italian MFA 2020, see appendix C.j.) However, this statement shows that they are actually tackling the adaption to the industry 4.0, even if not explicitly. Finally, Slovenia stated that the reasons were, on the one hand, the lack of available resources and, on the other hand, is bureaucracy holding the adaption back. Currently, Slovenia is establishing its own Diplomatic Academy, which will change their current situation. (Slovenian MFA 2020, see appendix C.o.) However, similar to France, they also raised security concerns, “It seems that the coronavirus, on the one hand, dissipated arguments that the on-line training is not desirable (due to security, technical or bureaucratic reasons).” (Slovenian MFA 2020, see appendix C.o.)

Although the obtained information can only evince if the MFAs have made changes, some of the undertaken measures likely resemble one another. Not only because their work fields look quite similar, but also because of external training partnerships and offerings. France, for instance, mentioned that they are not only focusing on strengthening existing cooperations but also looking into gaining new partnerships to ensure complementarity with their foreign partners (French MFA, see appendix C.g). However, this does neither mean that they are on the same level, nor that they follow the same strategies.

2.3.1. Future Intentions

The second part of the questionnaire was devoted to the future training plans of the MFAs. When asked about the same parameters for the future as for the past twenty years, the given answers differed evidently. Figure 3 displays the answers for the related question to the future.

Figure 3: Intended Changes in the Training of Mid-Career Diplomats



Source: Own representation based on the completed questionnaires (see appendix C)

The data suggest that in future, most MFAs are planning to focus on changing the content of their training. That makes perfect sense when thinking about the predictions of the scholars that claim that not only the technological advancement changes ever more rapidly but also the actors and methods on international and domestic stages. Consequently, training sessions must also adapt their contents consistently in the future.

In terms of prospective changes in the medium of their mid-career training, no trend becomes visible from this sample data. However, that may also result from the circumstances of that particular training component, the medium. It is always hard to predict the future possibilities technological developments will offer; therefore, the used medium in forthcoming educational contexts may very well change rapidly when a newly developed technology is advantageous. A change in training obligations is unplanned for most of the MFAs. Nevertheless, also in this regard, it is impossible to say whether the MFAs have similar training structures in terms of making them compulsory for everybody, selecting candidates or giving all mid-career diplomats the chance to sign up for their training courses voluntarily.

When comparing the results over time, then the content-related changes still show a similar distinctness of the responses. Nevertheless, interesting is not only that France did not make any content-related changes yet but intends to start with it, but also that Croatia and Luxembourg seem to have the opposite viewpoint (see table 1). They appear to consider their changes in content to have been satisfactory because they plan not to maintain changing it. Nearly half of the consulted MFAs do not express considerations of changing the used mediums in the future. Therefore, it may indicate that the MFAs which changed their mediums within the last 20 years but refrain from changing it further are satisfied with their current solutions. Furthermore, there seem to be only a few MFAs who are planning on changing training obligations for mid-career diplomats. This also signals that most MFAs are pleased with their current practices. However, it is vital to keep in mind that the completed questionnaires are just a snapshot and that their points on the agenda can – and probably will – change and adapt to future developments and advancements.

Table 2 clarifies which other suggested changes MFAs intend to undertake if ticked in table 1. However, there is no more detailed information available on them; they only demonstrate how far-reaching the planned changes are supposed to be. Interestingly, no MFA seems to have planned any changes in an area that was not listed in the questionnaire.

Table 2: Other Intended Changes in the Training of Mid-Career Diplomats

	Strategy	Vision	Goal
Belgium	✓	✓	
Croatia	✓		
Czechia		✓	✓
Finland	✓		✓
France	✓	✓	✓
Ireland	✓		
Luxembourg		✓	
Portugal	✓		✓
Romania	✓		
Slovakia	✓	✓	✓
Slovenia	✓		
Switzerland		✓	

Source: Own representation based on the completed questionnaires (see appendix C)

2.3.2. Overall Developments

These already discussed results show that MFAs recognized the need for adapting their training situations. However, evaluating the surveys' comments showed that these MFAs are not only at different starting points but also chose different approaches and emphases in this matter. Table 3 beneath provides an overview of the corresponding answers from the questionnaire, which permit this hypothesis.

Out of the thirteen interviewed MFAs, nearly everybody stated to have blended learning⁶ facilities in place for their mid-career training. According to the answers, only four countries – Austria, Croatia, Italy, and Slovenia – still solely rely on training in person. However, Austria specifically plans to execute content-related alterations, which is probably referring to the implementation of e-learning (Austrian MFA 2020, see appendix C.a.). Croatia only indicates changes in their strategy, but no directly expressed intentions of changing the used medium in their training sessions (Croatian MFA 2020, see appendix C.c.).

⁶ Blended learning methods are used when the sessions are not only in person but also online; hence, if it consists of hybrid learning. (e-teaching.org 2017)

Baldi (2014); however, already wrote an article about introducing e-learning to the Italian MFA. Moreover, Italy commented on the questionnaire that “In light of the COVID-19 pandemics, it is likely that in the future a blended learning approach will be developed.” (Italian MFA 2020, see appendix C.j.) Finally, also the Slovenian MFA (2020) argues that “In the future, we will supplement in person education with audio and video materials as an auxiliary learning tool.” (see appendix C.o.) However, when explaining their future intentions for their soon-to-be Diplomatic Academy, they argue that “Nonetheless, the preferable mode of training will remain to be person-to-person, as this is still the most genuine mode for the transfer of knowledge and communication (in particular the availability of an immediate feedback.” (see appendix C.o.) Therefore, it is obvious that the Slovenian MFA is planning on implementing a blended learning approach too. However, it will be contrary to, for instance, France. The French MFA (2020) mentioned in their questionnaire that e-learning already constitutes the heart of their training (see appendix C.h.).

Table 3: Overview of Current Training Practices for Mid-Career Diplomats

	Voluntary	Chosen by the MFA	Compulsory	Only internal	External only	A combination	Teaching format	Considered for posting	Not considered for posting	Similar for bi- and multilateral diplomats
	Obligation			Provider		Further Information				
Austria	✓	✓	✓		✓	O	✓			
Belgium	✓	✓			✓	B	✓			✓
Croatia		✓			✓	O	✓			✓
Czechia		✓			✓	B	✓	✓		✓
Estonia	✓	✓	✓		✓	B		✓		✓
Finland	✓	✓			✓	B				Y&N
France		✓			✓	B	✓			✓
Ireland		✓			✓	B		✓		✓
Italy			✓		✓	O		✓		✓
Luxembourg		✓	✓		✓	B	✓			?
Portugal	✓	✓			✓	B	✓			✓
Romania	✓	✓			✓	B	✓			✓
Slovakia		✓	✓		✓	B	✓			✓
Slovenia			✓		✓	O		✓		✓
Sweden		✓			✓	B	✓	✓		✓
Switzerland		✓			✓	B	✓	✓		✓

B = Blended Learning

O = Only in Person

Y&N = Yes & No

? = No Answer given

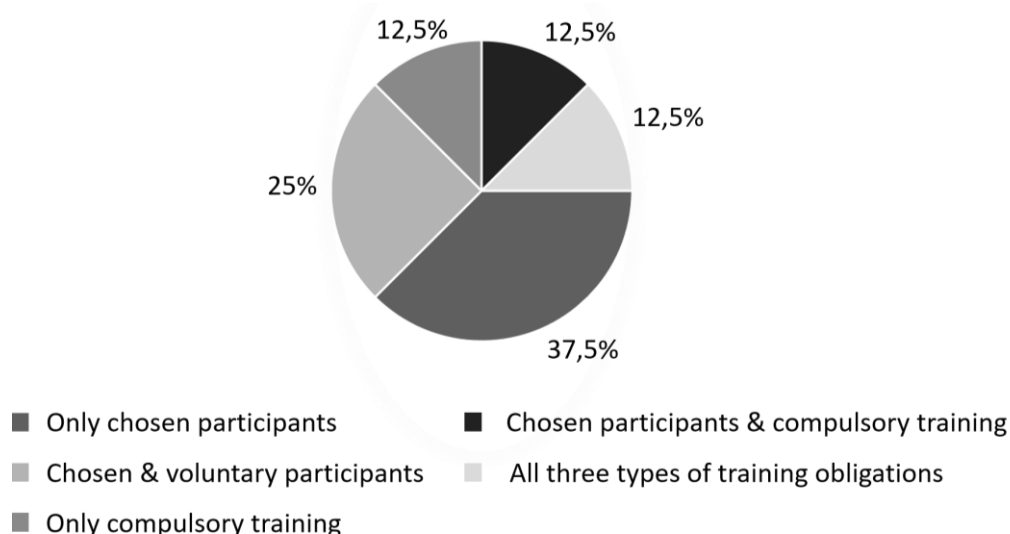
Source: Own representation based on the completed questionnaires (see appendix C)

In terms of the advanced training offers, all MFAs employ a combination of internal and external opportunities. Ireland, for instance, mentioned that diplomats could actively request to join external training courses that cover their needs and the MFA will then decide on a case-by-case basis whether they will get the needed time off to participate (Irish MFA, see appendix C.i.).

However, there are some deviations regarding the basic framework of the training. Most countries do not differentiate training between training diplomats who work in a bilateral context and the ones who work in a multilateral one. Such a distinction is only made in two countries and maybe in Luxembourg as well, but they refrained from answering this part of the question. Nevertheless, these results do not tell us how the MFAs handle the two different work posting contexts. Evidently, the work of a diplomat looks different if they are working bilaterally than if they have to represent their country in a multilateral setting. Depending on the country, there are probably different processes in place that either select diplomats to join either one career paths or the ones where they can swap between them. However, further studies in both cases would be interesting to analyze and compare how MFAs prepare their diplomats for the upcoming posting type.

When looking at the obligatory factor of the offered training, there is some heterogeneity. Figure 4 shows all the different combinations of offered training-obligation-types that are available in the sample countries.

Figure 4: Offered Types of Obligation for Training Mid-Career Diplomats



Source: Own representation based on the completed questionnaires (see appendix C)

Austria and Estonia both offer as only ones all three types of training sessions. Interestingly, they have different approaches in considering training for posting their diplomats, as shown in table 3. Estonia stated that they do not consider it at all when choosing the next workstations for the diplomats. Austria, on the flip side, mentioned that they very well consider the attended training in their decision-making process.

In general, there are different strategies that MFAs follow for their posting decisions. Only eleven of the sixteen countries said that they consider training for the diplomats' postings; however, two of them also checked the box that said that they do not consider it and one country did not provide any information on it. Overall, there does not seem to be any connection with the used obligation-types for training sessions. Ireland, Italy, and Slovenia are three of the four countries that do not consider completed training units for their diplomats' next posting. However, in contrast to Estonia, the fourth one that does not consider training for the postings of their diplomats, this handling seems logical for all three of them since they only offer compulsory training sessions or courses for which the MFA themselves chooses the participants. Czechia, Sweden, and Switzerland all only offer training units for chosen diplomats but decided to consider some of them for the diplomat's next training. This gives rise to the impression that they only offer preparatory training that the diplomats will attend once their next posting location is clear and compulsory training that every diplomat must attend at some point. Unfortunately, having a closer look at these procedures to find out whether they look at the individual learning needs of their diplomats would go beyond the scope of the paper.

When putting together their training plans, the countries also seem to have varying approaches. The Czechian MFA (2020) and the Estonian MFA (2020) both wrote in their comments that they make yearly training plans for their diplomats (see appendixes C.d. and C.e.). Estonia furthermore clarifies their course of action by explaining that they have a "5-year personnel development plan which in its turn is composed of concrete yearly development plans together with finances." (Estonian MFA 2020, see appendix C.e.) They set out their goals through running a SWOT⁷ analysis as well as by asking their employees for their feedback (Estonian MFA, see appendix C.e.). France and Slovakia set out their goals in a similar vein. They claim to focus on their employees' needs when putting together the offered training (French MFA 2020, see appendix C.h. and Slovakian MFA 2020, see appendix C.n.).

⁷ SWOT is the abbreviation for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threads.

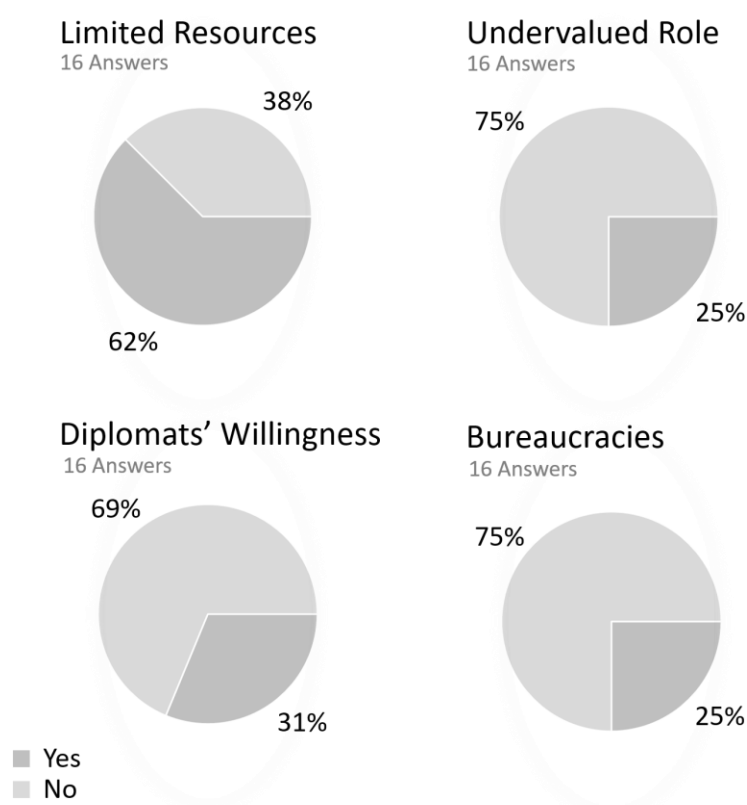
Despite the annual planning and considering of their employees' needs, did only two of the four countries, namely Estonia and France, mention their implemented evaluation process explicitly. Furthermore, overall, there were only two other countries who mentioned that evaluation processes are regular parts of their training planning, Finland and Czechia. The Finnish MFA (2020) commented that "The training supply is constantly being reviewed and fine-tuned against the identified needs and demand and the feed-back received from present course." (see appendix C.f.) However, according to the information by the Czechian MFA (2020), they seem to make the evaluation already on an individual basis: "To fulfil training plan of each employee prepared on a yearly term is part of a personal assessment of each diplomat." (see appendix C.d.) For the rest of the countries, there are two possible explanations for not bringing up that process step:

1. They did not deem it necessary because they either thought it was not directly asked for in the questionnaire, or because they thought that it was apparent that the evaluation of training is part of any adaption.
2. In spite of adapting their training continuously, they do not evaluate their changes.

The questionnaire furthermore asked for the challenges that the MFAs expect to face while trying to implement their planned training adaptations and updates. Figure 5 shows the countries' answers.

As anticipated, most MFAs see the limited available resources as a significant challenge for adapting their training environment for mid-career diplomats. Surprisingly, only four MFAs seem to trace it back or be influenced by the undervalued role of the diplomatic training. Therefore, the expected limitedness for the other MFAs is assumingly due to an overall scarceness within the MFA. Also, the individuals' learning commitment is not often considered a prospective challenge for the intended changes to the training practices. Unexpectedly, there were only four countries that are worried about bureaucratic obstacles and barriers.

Figure 5: Expected Challenges for Changes in the Training of Mid-Career Diplomats



Source: Own representation based on the completed questionnaires (see appendix C)

Additionally, the evaluation of the questionnaire also revealed country-specific issues that MFAs have to face. The Belgian MFA (2020), for instance, wrote that “The discussion about the need for training for mid-career diplomats is ongoing, but there is a growing consensus for the need of it.” (see appendix C.b.) This shows that they are still struggling with the undervaluation of the impact that training can have on the work of mid-career diplomats. Estonia mentioned that “The biggest challenge is management training esp. their willingness to develop as managers.” (Estonian MFA 2020, see appendix C.e) Ireland, on the other hand, currently faces two entirely different situations that constitute major challenges for them. “We are approaching a period where we will have many diplomats retiring over the next 10 years, this will lead to a loss of institutional memory and will require significant investment in training of new diplomats. Similarly, difficulties arising from the British exit from the EU will stretch our resources.” (Irish MFA 2020, see appendix C.i.) These issues show that MFAs cannot just concentrate on contextual developments, but also each have to deal with internal transformations. However, losing institutional memory, while being disadvantageous, can also be used as an opportunity. Often a change in employees can pose the chance to adapt the organizational culture, the internal procedures and training routines since a new routine has to

develop. The Italian MFA (2020) also stated that they expect to have other challenges when trying to implement the intended changes to the mid-career training of diplomats; however, they did not clearly explain which ones they refer to (see appendix C.j.).

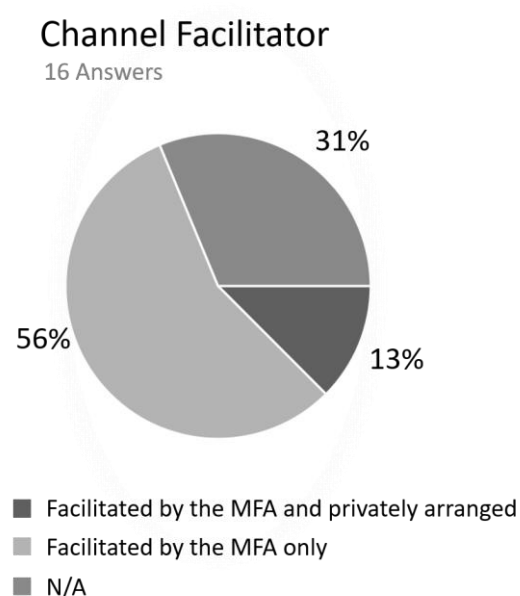
Another question that was added to the survey was about the organizational culture and should have allowed a vague notion of the informal learning situations within the MFAs. However, when asked about the exchange, and therewith informal learning situation of their diplomats, there seemed to be some confusion.

Figure 6 shows that only 69% of the surveyed MFAs were able to state whether their diplomats' channels of communications are facilitated by the MFA itself, or privately arranged. However, it is not clear if the question was understood correctly by them since some of them elaborated on their posting situation for diplomats in the comment section of this question. Moreover, there was one country, which did not tick any box in the first question, wrote that they do not understand the question. This means that either the question's formulation was not clear enough, or if the subject is not on the MFAs agendas at all.

Nevertheless, there were two countries, which stated that their diplomats have both, channels that are facilitated by the MFA themselves as well as privately arranged ones. This either shows that the provided ones are not sufficient, or that their diplomats strictly distinguish between business and private communications. The results still show that the communication between diplomats may be worth looking into, even though no profound theory can be derived from the here obtained results.

The second aspect that was asked in the question dealt with the frequency of the exchange. Here the given answers provide a quite satisfying impression, as figure 7 beneath shows. Only Belgium and Slovenia stated that they would endorse a higher amount of exchange between their diplomats, but also here the obscurity of the question might have falsified the given the answers. The Slovenian MFA (2020), for instance, commented that "a more systematic practice is needed", after explaining that most of the exchange seems to happen "during the

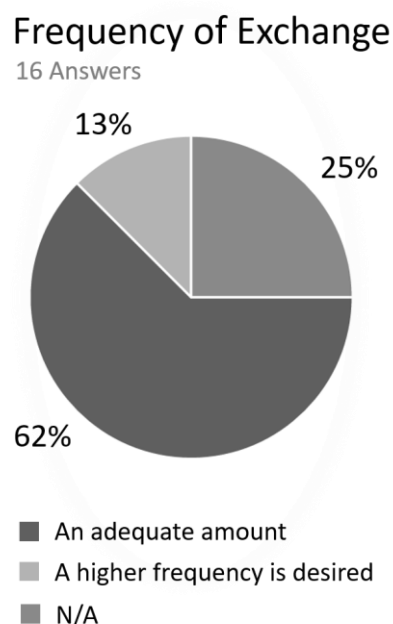
Figure 6: Providers of the Communication Channels for Diplomats within their MFA



Source: Own representation based on the completed questionnaires (see appendix C)

work meetings ... In addition, some exchange takes place during the yearly training programmes for diplomatic exams.” (see appendix C.o.) However, the Italian MFA (2020) stated something similar: “Mid-career diplomats training, based in Rome, traditionally provides an important networking venue for mid-career diplomats after approx. 8 years abroad.” (see appendix C.j.) But the Italian MFA sees this frequency of exchange sufficient, even though - according to the given information – it is quite low compared to the exchange between the Slovenian diplomats. This shows that the MFAs have quite different attitudes towards the exchange between their diplomats; only a few of them seem to consider it as important and in need of support. However, in this regard, it is not possible to derive a well-founded statement from the gathered data; further research in that area would be necessary in order to develop a sound theory on that subject.

Figure 7: Assessment by the MFA on the Exchanges between their Diplomats



Source: Own representation based on the completed questionnaires (see appendix C)

Considering all the found information, it is obvious that there is no one-way solution for training mid-career diplomats. It always depends on previous cultural developments and routines. Changing habits becomes even harder, the longer they have been maintained. Additionally, it can be said that the survey proofed that change is happening and that MFAs try to adapt their training for mid-career diplomats successfully. Nevertheless, it is hard to derive overall trends, predictions and explanations from the evaluation of this questionnaire. Therefore, the second part of this paper will choose two of the surveyed Central European MFAs in order to examine their mid-career training a bit closer by finding possible reasons and explanations for their situations.

3. Theory

Training has always been an essential part MFAs since it “... is the first essential step towards the efficient functioning of a unified body... “ (Frattini 2010, 220). It is not only used for teaching knowledge and skills but also plays an essential role in developing an environment that helps employees to socialize and professionalize (Cross 2011, 463). However, its role has often been underestimated and therewith also the research in this area is lacking.

Mr Karlev (2018), who I already quoted in the introduction, argued in the same piece that diplomacy is inefficient because of the tradition to send off diplomats to their first postings with limited instructions and training and to let them learn and develop the necessary skills on-the-job for themselves. Nevertheless, recent developments in both the practical as well as the scholarly area led to an increased awareness of the impact a well-designed learning environment can have on the effectiveness of the MFA, and therewith also research in this area increased.

Since the first part showed that there is a change happening in the training of mid-career diplomats, the next part will choose MFAs for a more detailed analysis and tries to find possible explanations for their approaches and dealings. Therefore, this section tries to follow a rather typical deductive research design when examining the learning situation of mid-career diplomats.

Until now, this paper did not distinguish between the different subcategories of training and learning within a firm. However, for the next part of the research, a more detailed definition will be needed. Therefore, this paper will use Büniger's (2009) categorization and definitions because of its pedagogical-didactical approach. She differentiates between three types of focuses within organizations (14-15):

- **In-firm Training / *Betriebliche Weiterbildung***

In-firm training concerns all qualifications of the employees, that take place after the initial training.

- **Operational Training Management / *Betriebliches Bildungsmanagement***
Internal operational training management aims to align the developed competences of the employees with the values and goals of the company.
- **In-firm Education / *Betriebliche Bildung***
In-firm education is used as a collective term which includes all kind of learning activities that exist within the corporate context; hence, it incorporates both formal and informal processes.

The paper previously focused on the in-firm training that diplomats face when they are in the middle of their career. This will remain the focus also for the next part; however, it will also look at the other two categories when trying to explain how the current situation has developed.

Even though there is not a lot of literature available in the context of training mid-career diplomats, or diplomats all together, there are still interesting findings in other research areas that might be relevant. Therefore, the next chapter will provide a broad overview of the available scholarly sources before deriving the hypothesis for the empirical study from it.

3.1. Literature Review

As mentioned above, there are various research areas and factors that impact the changing in-firm training of an MFA. This chapter will provide a structured overview of the available literature that is relevant for this paper. Therefore, the reviewed sources will be divided into three categories: the contextual influences of the sector, the prevailing organizational culture within the respective departments, and their ability to adapt to technological developments.

3.1.1. Implications of the Organizational Context

The European Commission's report on the topic of 'Public Sector Innovation' in 2013 argues that "Public and private sectors are fundamentally different". (30) They argue that the distinctive difference is that if a public organization implements a change, it is important to succeed with the innovation but even more important not to fail. Hence, their public role requires reliability which hinders change and therewith innovation. (30) Therefore, the report suggests that "The role of the public manager and, indeed, of public staff, will be to strike a very different balance between administration, stability and predictability on the one hand, and leadership, change and innovation on the other hand." (30) An essential part of changing the public sectors' innovation is not only the experienced style of leadership but also an altered governance model, and such models are emerging. (15,30)

In foreign policy decision-making analysis, Allison's three models are the most commonly used frameworks in researches. They all have different approaches that help to explain the decision-making process: the rational actor model (RAM), the organizational process model (OPM), and the governmental/bureaucratic politics model (Welch 1992, 114). For the topic of change in the training of mid-career diplomats, only the second two models are relevant for the organizational context since they might help to identify the impact governance models can have on the internal learning situation.

Allison depicts the OPM as "a conglomerate of semi-feudal, loosely allied organizations" where "Government leaders do sit formally and, to some extent, in fact, on top of this conglomerate." (as cited in Welch 1992, 116-117) This means that decisions are made with the help of routine processes. "Governmental behaviour can therefore be understood ... less as deliberate choices and more as *outputs* of large organizations functioning according to standard patterns of behaviour ... At any given time, a government consists of *existing* organizations, each with a *fixed* set of standard operating procedures and programs." (Allison as cited in Welch 1992, 117) Therefore, Allison suggested, that the resistance of change can be derived from the routines, that organizational processes established (Welch 1992, 120). This derivation, in turn, confirms the weakness of current governance models, which is criticized by the report on public sector innovation.

The bureaucratic politics model "explains deviations from ideal rationality by revealing the political gamesmanship behind them. Unlike organizational routines, these games may

operate during the moment of decision itself as well as in the option-formation stage or during implementation ...” (Welch 1992, 117) Therefore, Welch (1992) summarizes Allison’s suggestion by saying “that bureaucratic position determines a player’s perception of an issue” (120). However, not only the individual’s position has an impact on the awareness and attitude but also the personality, the organizational culture, the national attitude and the group interests influence the position. (121) This even reaches so far that “As Stephen Krasner puts it, bureaucratic analysis implies that the office – not its occupant – determines how players behave.” (121)

Those two models might be able to help explain why change is or is not happening within an organization or a department, and which initiatives are getting implemented.

In general, there is a lot of literature available on the topic of diplomacy and its historical evolution. Similarly well examined are the current developments diplomacy faces and the therefrom derived theories of future prospects. Well-known scholars in the field of digital diplomacy are Bjola⁸, Manor⁹, and Spry¹⁰. They are exploring what role digitalization plays in the current work of diplomats and how it will change work tasks in the future. From their point of view, the importance of networks, digital, and public diplomacy will be growing even further; thus, they stress that the work of diplomats must adapt in a timely manner. However, due to the limited scope of this paper, the following part of the paper will not be able to provide a sufficient overview in that regard, especially since this is not the main focus of the research.

Though Bjola and Kornprobst (2018) did not only provide a summary of the evolution of diplomacy and diplomatic work, they also summarized the current diplomatic field and commented on it. The authors argue that “diplomats are embedded in context, some of which is very much their own making, and this context enables and constrains their actions.” (8) Therefore, they also raise the question of Re-making the diplomat.

⁸ Prof. Corneliu Bjola is an associate professor at the University of Oxford in Diplomatic Studies, and his field of research includes digital diplomacy, strategic communication, and diplomatic theory (Bjola n.d.).

⁹ Mr Ilan Manor is a research student at the Oxford Department of International Development with a focus on diplomacy and digital diplomacy (Oxford Department of International Development n.d.).

¹⁰ Dr. Damien Spry is a lecturer at the Media & Communications School of Creative Industries at the University of South Australia (UniSA) and currently studies the areas of Facebook, Twitter, and public diplomacy as well as social media and politics (UniSA n.d.).

However, in terms of organizational structure in MFAs and its evolution, the organizational fields theory could help to explain some aspects. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) wrote the article “The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields”. There they argue that the diversity in organizational models decreases because of organizational fields.

Fields only exist to the extent that they are institutionally defined... Once disparate organizations in the same line of business are structured into an actual field (as we shall argue, by competition, the state, or the professions), powerful forces emerge that lead them to become more similar to one another. (DiMaggio and Powell 1983, 148)

This process then can lead to the implementation of strategies and processes that are unnecessary or maybe even hindering. Even if organizations try to change that, “at a certain point in the structuration of an organizational field, the aggregate effect of individual change is to lessen the extent of diversity within the field” (149). Concerning the topic of this paper, it could be interesting to see whether the concept of organizational fields can explain the developments and handlings of the training of mid-career diplomats.

Another important concept that might influence the training situation of diplomats is Nye’s theory of soft power. Nye (2008) states that one’s behavior can be directed through “threats of coercion (‘sticks’), inducements and payments (‘carrot’), and attraction that makes others want what you want.” (94) Soft power refers to the last option; it is the power of becoming others to want the outcome that is desired by you. The main tools that can be used for it are foreign policies, political and cultural values. Furthermore, public diplomacy must be used strategically in order to form an intended country image that helps to generate power. (95-96). Therefore, Nye states that “in behavioural terms, soft power is attractive power” (95). The recognition of this concept of soft power, in turn, has a significant impact on the work of diplomats. If they want to be able to make use of this theory, they need to be equipped with the necessary skills and tools. Also, Peterkova (2020) comes to the conclusion that “Science, innovation, and technology is a relevant and topical issue of today’s society and even in international relations and foreign policy. The ability to innovate is one of the significant sources of soft power.” (7)

3.1.2. Implications of the Organizational Culture

When looking at more specific sources that deal with the training of diplomats itself, the available research becomes quite limited. However, the pioneer researcher in the area of training and its necessity for an effective diplomatic service is Kishan S. Rana. He was working for the Indian Foreign Service, and now he is doing his research on the diplomatic process and how it can be improved. In his work, he especially highlights the benefits the internet offers for training the globally scattered staff of MFAs. (Rana n.d.) Therefore, he advises MFAs to take advantage of the newly available opportunities to change their learning environments. His work ‘Diplomatic Education’ underlines the importance of a lifelong learning diplomat, and he argues that “The foreign ministries that do not pay enough attention to this are the losers in an age when competency requirements change and sharpen all the time.” (2007, 98) He also explains the problematic of externally offered university courses. They are only of limited benefit since it is hard to organize and because they are only available for a small number of people each year. In that context, he draws attention to the DiploFoundation, where he is working as well. He argues that DiploFoundation tries to tackle these problems of availability and compatibility by offering online courses, of which some can even be credited at the University of Malta. Furthermore, he underlines the often overlooked mutual learning that takes place within the group of people who undergo the entry training together. (Rana 2007, 98-100)

Another paper written by Mr Rana on the topic was published in 2016 with the title ‘Diplomatic Training: New Trends’. There he argues that “In foreign ministries around the world, training is undergoing intensification and expansion.” (Rana 2016, 41) There he talks about the highlights of the newly established Diplomatic Academy of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (DAFCO) and argues that Canada’s MFA had a leading role in implementing online learning tools. Canada made two self-learning courses, which can be imagined like MOOC¹¹s (Rana 2016, 43) Furthermore, he states that “Balancing resources, both material and human, against evolving needs is a constant challenge, particularly for small countries.” (Rana 2016, 43) In that context, he also states that he has the impression that things are changing, and that training starts to get the attention it deserves within the MFAs.

¹¹ MOOC is the acronym for a Massive Open Online Course

Moreover, there is a series called Favorita Papers, which is run by the Vienna School of International Studies (DA) and complements their training programmes. The paper *Raising Diplomats*, written by Guedes in 2008, takes up the topic of training diplomats; however, he does that from a rather organizational point of view. Amongst the historical evolution, he also discusses political bureaucracies and the different approaches to it. Moreover, in its annex, he already touches the topic of Central European Initiative (CEI) and their neglect of the topic of training diplomatic staff. He argues that “Diplomacy and, therefore, the training of diplomats, are too close to State sovereignty and to often deeply held notions of identity...” (2018, 159) and that closer cooperation will be needed to harmonize and establish a united front, especially in external negotiations. Furthermore, he already then pointed out that this process of harmonization will be essential for the successful establishment of an EEAS. (2018, 159)

As a matter of fact, the establishment of the EEAS raised awareness of the topic of training - as Guedes (2008) anticipated correctly - since there, the training can be planned from scratch. This not only means that now there is the time to implement a well thought out program but also to make sure that this newly developed program will be able to adapt to future changes and challenges. However, Cross (2011) already states in her research paper that “Surprisingly, there is virtually nothing in the political science literature that analyses the nature of bureaucratic or diplomatic recruitment and training directly.” (455) This already shows that the research – and consequently the knowledge – on concepts of training diplomats is confined. Cross (2011) suggests in her paper *Building a European Diplomacy: Recruitment and Training to the EEAS* that “a kind of European diplomatic academy is necessary to maximize the cohesiveness and effectiveness of the new foreign service.” (449) She argues that the learning environment has to be designed so that it can foster an esprit de corps and enable social learning within the EEAS (453, 456). She is not alone with demanding a unified body. Frattini (2010) argues that “The change in international relationships clearly requires an up-to-date diplomatic approach.” (222) In his opinion, the member states already recognized the need and importance of appropriate training for their diplomats. He furthermore states that he is well aware of the fact that it will be a challenge to combine these training types since they differ hugely in their focuses and world views. However, in contrast to Ms Cross’ point of view, he suggests that the EU should take advantage of the already existing entities and universities the member states can offer. (Frattini 2010, 222, 226) Even if this literature is not really in the same research area as this paper’s research question, its findings and arguments

should be kept in mind when analyzing the trend of changing the learning environment for diplomats and it also touches the question whether an entity should build their own learning institution or if existing, external ones are sufficient.

Baldi wrote another interesting article in the field of diplomatic education. In his article, he reports the experiments and findings the Italian MFA made by introducing online learning to its staff. He explains the challenges such an organization has to face when doing so. (Baldi 2014, 30) He also addresses their lessons learned (39-40):

- Much time is needed for planning and implementing online learning.
- A designated team that is responsible for setting up the online learning is necessary.
- Who puts together the learning content makes a huge difference, especially for MFAs and its particularities.
- At the beginning, it is more important that the tools are easy to understand and use than to make it perfect, which is not possible anyhow.
- Having a small but well developed and implemented course is favorable.
- Including rewards or certification is a must for getting people to get and stay involved.
- Changing the learning situation is only the beginning of creating the desired working culture.

However, the one thing he wants to highlight is that “the use of new technologies and tools, even when they are simple and short, need time and practice before becoming part of a ‘corporate culture’ and therefore being part of the accepted normal training programme.” (Baldi 2014, 38)

Stimson and the American Academy of Diplomacy (AAD) made a full report in 2011, where they discussed the training situation of diplomats. They focus on the ability to make use of the three types of powers that Nye identified. However, in their report they draw attention to their mid-level gap that is related to the current learning situation. “To deal with the need to more rapidly institute mid-level skills, we recommend the establishment of a corps

of roving mentors and career counsellors using serving officers, supplemented by recently retired FSO¹²s.” (Stimson and AAD 2011, 46). In general, the report shows that the Academy is driving for a more professionalized education and training for diplomats in order to stay effective in the 21st century.

Since the awareness of the relevance of training diplomatic staff only seems to evolve now, research on the topic is still limited. However, scholars do not have to start from scratch in every aspect of the topic; learning cultures and changing training situations in firms and organizations is already a well-examined research area. Therefore, it makes sense to determine not only what theories and concepts are available there, but also what (parts) of them are transferrable to the context of MFAs and under which constraints. Furthermore, an important aspect of changing the training situation within a firm is the organization’s adaptivity - since change always requires an adaption to something new – and the overall in-firm education, that includes both, formal and informal learning activities within a firm.

3.1.3. Implications of the Organization’s Adaptability

A research made by McKinsey looked at the similarities and differences between the private and the public sector in terms of people and transformations. They claim that “Transformation in government is a hugely complex undertaking. That makes it critical to get the people component right.” (Checinski et al. 2019) One of their findings was that there are gaps between the private organizational health and the public one. These gaps mostly concern the culture, co-ordination concerns and capabilities. They argue that amongst other things there was one significant factor that may help explain the differences: Public organizations seem to have a high-risk aversion, which has to be tackled, before introducing any kind of change. (Checinski et al. 2019)

Training concepts and strategies are well researched in the private sector. Bünger (2009), for instance, wrote her dissertation about the strategical educational management and the creation of education strategies within organizations. She argues that PD tries to establish organizational learning which will eventually lead to an in-house knowledge. Moreover, this

¹² FSO means Foreign Service Officer

knowledge should then operate as the base of decision-making processes. However, organizational learning can only occur if the individual employees interact with each other, also regarding their organizational relationship. (18-19) This would mean in the context of creating an organizational development in diplomacy, that the interaction between diplomats among each other and the MFA is crucial for its organizational learning as well as their individual learning. However, no research has been done to examine whether this concept could be simply transferred to the context of diplomacy, or if its peculiarity would demand adaptations to launch a '*learning MFA*'. Scholars, such as Erpenbeck and Sauter (2013) envision technology to become a central aspect of the learning process. They argue that soon a so-called Learning Partner Computer will not only analyze the learning behavior on an emotional basis and suggest suitable and most promising learning procedures, but also provide the necessary support during the whole process. (VI, 97)

Furthermore, the private context also offers much research on why PD has to change and what should be considered in the process. In the book *Agiles Lernen*¹³, the authors argue that the economy is heavily influenced by the four megatrends of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity - these developments are referred to with the acronym VUCA world. These trends affect the decision making as well as the work and the learning behavior more and more since they call for fundamental changes in the values and basic understandings in the PD departments. (Graf, Grams, and Edelkraut 2017, 15-17, 59) The authors argue that the outcome and not the output should be used to evaluate training. This means it should not be considered how many offers there were or how many used them, but it should be looked at the success of these offers; hence, lead to demand-oriented in-firm training. However, they also admit that this kind of measuring is difficult to manage since one cannot say for sure what is responsible for the outcome. Furthermore, they state that firms do not have the capacities and opportunities to allocate knowledge and skills deficits, and even if they did, there would not be enough time or resources to put together further training offers to close them. (Graf, Grams, and Edelkraut 2017, 47, 49) Therefore, they suggest that PD departments develop an agile learning culture within an organization. This would mean that the PD department provides various resources that enable the employees to learn whatever skills or knowledge they need. However, the learner himself will then be responsible for using the possibilities consciously and achieve sustainable learning success. (Graf, Grams, and Edelkraut 2017, 35,

¹³ Engl.: Agile Learning

42-43) Nevertheless, studies in the diplomatic context on the change of perspective seem to have hardly happened neither.

Another emerging trend is the development towards so-called Deliberately Developmental Organizations (DDO). The article Making Business Personal states that most firms are not able to take advantage of all their staff's resources, simply because they focus on hiding their weaknesses and cover up their mistakes – not only from their colleagues but often also from themselves. Such working cultures hinder personal advancements and therewith also the possible productivity of the organization. The authors even go as far as to claim that this behavior can be seen as the staff's secondary profession. The goal of DDOs is to turn around this atmosphere and encourage people to make mistakes and talk about their weaknesses. DDOs strive for an organizational culture where people trust each other and feel safe; only then they will be able to change that behavior. However, another important part of the establishment of this new culture would be that the organization provides an adequate combination of support and challenges that enables its employees to learn. (Kegan et al. 2014) Naturally, this concept is not transferrable to MFAs per se since diplomats should not be encouraged to make mistakes and show their weaknesses when representing a whole country. However, for the internal learning culture, this concept could very well be interesting and beneficial for the efficiency and development of MFAs.

3.2. Theoretical Framework

For the second empirical part of the research, this paper will try to test whether MFAs follow the mentioned theories of the private sector and if so, to what degree they are transferrable or adapted. For putting together an appropriate theoretical framework that can be tested, theories will be derived from the previous parts. Therefore, the literature from chapter 3.1. gets compared to the analysis of the available information on the training of mid-career diplomats of the 21st century (see chapter 2.3.).

Generally, governments focused for a long time on “training in the policy and diplomacy skills” (Checinski et al. 2019). However, recently the diplomatic actors increased, as scholars like Bjola and Kornprobst (2019) rightfully highlight: “The field of diplomacy is

no longer populated just by representatives of foreign services, but also by representatives of other ministries, multinational corporations, civil society organizations, and even influential individuals who do not represent a particular state, organization or corporation.” (4) Furthermore, they argue that “The multiplication of actors and issue areas also changes the ways diplomats do their work. It changes both their daily practices and their methods for handling international negotiations, public engagements and situations of international crisis.” (5) Therefore, the training focus of governments should also be adapting to these developments, especially for diplomats. McKinsey identified four new areas that should be prioritized (Checinski et al. 2019):

1. Operational delivery
2. Analytics
3. Change Management
4. Communications

This expansion of the skill requirements displays the importance of providing employees with the fitting offers for further training. Furthermore, also Nye stated that the utilization of *soft power* becomes more and more important and diplomats need to acquire different skills than for the practice of the until now often prevailing *hard power*. The evaluation of the questionnaires (see chapter 2.3.) seems to support the theory that MFAs recognize the importance of designing the training for mid-career diplomats suitably since only four out of the sixteen indicated to expect challenges for their intended changes due to the undervalued status of diplomats’ training (see table 1). There is a “declining public spending on labor-force training and support that has been observed in most Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries over the past 20 years.” (Checinski et al. 2019) This trend, in turn, can also be found in MFAs¹⁴ and is therefore not necessarily due to the undervaluation of training but to the overall scarceness of available resources in the MFAs. However, another possible explanation for the slow change process might be the influences that are taken into account with DiMaggio and Powell’s theory of organizational fields (see chapter 3.1.1.) and the prevailing governance models that seem to hinder change, such as the OPM – as discussed in the literature review. However, the fact that change is happening in

¹⁴ Ten out of the sixteen countries stated that limited resources constitute a challenge for their future training intentions (see table 1).

most MFAs suggests that they at least discerned the importance of constantly providing their employees with a continuously adjusted training environment.

Today's overall in-firm learning situations can be categorized into four different development stages. Scholars see the evolvement of the learning culture from *yesterday's* e-learning over *today's* blended learning and *tomorrow's* social learning to the predicted tripartite learning¹⁵ of *the day after tomorrow*, the definitions are summarized in box 4. The development of the different classifications is driven by technological development; therefore, they blend into each other. However, the location of the PD strongly depends on its learning culture's adaptability. (Sauter and Sauter 2013, 262)

Box 4:

E-Learning

The organization offers computer-based learning opportunities. (Sauter and Sauter 2013, 11)

Blended Learning

The organization combines the self-directed learning supported by the offered e-learning opportunities with problem-oriented workshops. (Sauter and Sauter 2013, 161)

Social Learning

The organization provides a social software, which supports the work process by having competence-oriented e-learning that is combined with self-directed, informal, and networked learning. (Sauter and Sauter 2013, 81)

Tripartite Learning/Triales Lernen

The organization includes technological developments (such as the Learning Partner Computer) in the learning and working process. (Erpenbeck and Sauter 2013, 166-167)

¹⁵ Translated from the German term *Triales Lernen*.

This shows that scholars of the private sector expect technology to develop in a way that it will help people to communicate and learn from each other. In the context of diplomats, Rana (2007) argues that this aspect of mutual learning does not get the attention it deserves (99). Furthermore, the private sector aims for providing each employee with its own customized learning environment that is well integrated into his or her work processes. According to Erpenbeck and Sauter (2013), this will be the so-called Learning Partner Computer. They envision it to be able to analyze the learning processes and then help to optimize them by providing specific assignments and supports. Therefore, its supervision would enable individual competence development, which is optimized to a level that has not been possible so far. (VI, 97)

However, in the context of diplomacy, departments only seem to start discovering the already existing opportunities. Rana (2016) takes the newly developed DAFCO (41), and the by the Canadian MFA provided MOOCs (43) as examples, when talking about the new trends. However, when looking at the evaluation of the questionnaires, it shows that MFAs may have different challenges to overcome, for example, Belgium still faces security challenges that are holding them back from taking advantage of the technological possibilities (see appendix C.b.). Contrarily, Italy already tried out online learning within their MFA. Baldi's (2014) paper (see chapter 3.1.2.) summarizes the overall implementation process and provides a compact list of lessons learned that others can use for organizing a smooth(er) transition.

Table 4: Content of Personnel Development Strategies

	Narrow Sensed PD	Expanded PD	Broadly Sensed PD
E	✓	✓	✓
F		✓	✓
OD			✓

PD = Personnel Development E = Education F = Fostering OD = Organizational Development

Source: Own representation based on Stopp and Kirschten (2012, 300)

Furthermore, if MFAs would actively shape the whole in-firm education – including the informal learning processes and granted that MFAs are able to take advantage of the technological opportunities - they could become much more flexible. According to Stopp and Kirschten (2012), PD can be categorized into three versions according to its content, as shown in table 4; and this would require MFAs to deploy a broadly sensed PD. Stopp and Kirschten (2012) define the measured areas as follows (299-300):

- **Education**

PD only concerns the provision and delivery of the qualifications required for the job.

- **Fostering**

The provided PD programmes support the personal developments of the employees too.

- **Organizational Development**

The interaction between the development of the employees and the organization leads to the establishment of a learning organization.

As the definitions in table 4 show, the implementation of a broadly sensed PD should eventually lead to the establishment of a learning organization. According to Bünger (2009, 18-19), this development is possible due to the foundation of a so-called in-house knowledge. However, finding an actual definition for a learning organization is quite hard. Garvin (1993) tried to sum up the essential key aspect an organization has to fulfil in order to qualify: “A learning organization is an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights.”

Therefore, not only the handling of knowledge but also the educational administration becomes crucial for an organization. This means that companies do not solely encourage their employees to conduct lifelong learning, but to learn content that is coordinated with the company’s needs. Scholars state that the desired learning content is the so-called *Sweet Spot of Learning*; this is the designation for the spot where the personal and organizational needs,

as well as the needs derived from the organizational context, meet, as figure 8 visualizes. (Graf, Grams, and Edelkraut 2017, 38-39)

Figure 8: The Sweet Spot of Learning



Source: Own representation based on Graf, Grams, and Edelkraut (2017, 40)

Since this Sweet Spot of Learning differs for each employee, the PD strategies would have to focus on each individual's need. This requires not only the PD to be agile, but the learner to have quite distinctive self-learning competencies. Possible guidelines for implementing an agile learning culture are the values for agile learning, which are listed in table 5. The portrayed concept of agile learning includes exactly this required reorientation towards the needs of the learner to make the organization and its learning culture flexible (Graf, Grams, and Edelkraut 2017, 42-43).

Table 5: Values for Agile Learning

Agile Learning Values		
Individual learning needs & interaction	is/are more important than	Processes & Tools
Functioning offers (in the sense of the occurring need)		Certificates & Test results
Support of the individual learning process		Defined methods & Models
Responding to changes		Processing of action plans

Source: Own representation based on Graf, Grams, and Edelkraut (2017, 42)

Nevertheless, the reorganization of the PD will only work if the employees are able to learn for themselves. This means they need to acquire the necessary – if not already existent – self-learning competencies, which enable a learning process to take place in the first place. Euler and Hahn (2007) argue that each competence's effectiveness depends on three different behavioral dimensions (134-135):

- **Recognition**

This means the existing knowledge, in the context of self-competences the knowledge about oneself. Therefore, the focus of action is cognitive.

- **Values**

This refers to the taking of a certain setting and attitude towards a topic. The assessment follows selected criteria, which, in relation to self-learning competences could be, for example, the criteria of usefulness and necessity.

- **Ability**

This concerns the skills that enable the actor to redesign or adapt things. It can be a psychometric process on the one hand, but it can also be related to intellectual processes, for example, when applying the acquired knowledge in practice.

Consequently, employees are on the one hand desired to know where to look for possible learning materials and learning support and how to learn, but on the other hand, they also need the right attitudes and skills to achieve a lasting learning outcome. In this context, PD strategies should also consider the Self-Determination Theory (SDT). Deci and Ryan (1993) argue that effective learning is always based on either intrinsic motivation, integrated self-regulation, or a combination of both since they assume that highly qualified learning can only be achieved through the commitment based on the individual self (233). In general, controlling measures and events, which are experienced as pressure, undermine intrinsic motivation and therewith hamper the learning process. In contrast, measures and feedbacks that increase the feeling of independence, i.e. that support an individual initiative, the freedom of choice, or simply the expression of appreciative feelings, promote, maintain and strengthen intrinsic motivation, which leads to a supporting effect for learning processes. (230)

However, creating an organizational culture that supports flexibility within the department often requires the willingness to take risks, especially during the implementation. Though, the report presented by McKinsey argues that currently the “risk environment in the public sector ... can only be described as asymmetric: civil servants are more likely to be penalized for failure than they are to be rewarded for innovation or outperformance.” (Checinski et al. 2019) This difference is understandable since the public sector faces a different context. MFAs, for instance, represent their home country abroad and if they decide to try out something new and it fails, it is very likely that the home country will be punished for this due to, for instance, an injured relation or a disadvantageous contract. However, also the public sector tries to implement change and innovation in their processes and organizations, as the report of the EU Commission shows (see chapter 3.1.1.).

Therefore, reorientation to the employees’ needs is not only necessary for the establishment of a learning organization but also for ensuring the prospectively envisioned developments. The Learning Partner Computer is much more significant than just a supporting mean that helps with establishing such a learning culture. The opportunity to refocus on the learners’ needs constitutes a prerequisite for the creation of a DDO. However, MFAs – same as the whole

public sector – need to find a secure way to establish an adequate working culture that allows for social learning and innovation.

To sum up, the following empirical study will test three hypotheses that try to combine the theories of the public with the ones from the private sector:

1. The importance and reputation of mid-career training within an MFA increases, if the ministry recognizes the quickly changing work-environment their diplomats are facing nowadays.
2. An MFA starts to focus more on the needs of the individual diplomat if it recognizes not only the need for mid-career training but also the methods and options that are possible these days.
3. If the learning culture of an MFA enables and fosters self-learning skills and organizational learning, it could become more agile in general – similar to the organizations of the private sector.

3.3. Research Design

The paper will use a small-n comparison to test the cause-effect relationship of these hypotheses. In this research design, the population will be countries of the descriptive study since those are the only ones where the necessary data is available. Regarding the case selection for the comparison, “cross-national studies often have a quasi-experimental form”. (Przeworski and Teune 1970, 32) This refers to the fact that if a study has to select countries, it always has to face restrictions such as resources and access to the relevant information. Therefore, it already has a limited choice of which it then has to find the two most comparable countries. (Przeworski and Teune 1970, 32) Accordingly, the case selection for this research will face the same challenges and restrictions. Thus, the more information can be found and accessed for the descriptive study, the smaller the limitations of this following small-n comparison.

The results of the previous study will further-more determine which comparison will be made, a Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD) or a Most Different Systems Design (MDSD). Box 5 provides a short overview of the basic ideas and the implications on the outcomes of the two different comparison strategies.

Box 5:

MSSD

In the MSSD, that constitutes a so-called maximum strategy according to Przeworski and Teune (1970, 32), the optimal samples have as many identical features as possible. They gave it the name maximum strategy because, with that research design, one is looking for cases that maximize the similarities so that the experimental variables are minimized. However, even in that design, the experimental variables will still be not known and large; the level of analysis in this design will be the systematic level. (Przeworski and Teune 1970, 32-33) The authors of the book *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry* explain that the following: “Common systemic characteristics are conceived of as ‘controlled for,’ whereas intersystemic differences are viewed as explanatory variables.” (Przeworski and Teune 1970, 33) MSSD tempt to make over-generalized conclusions. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that “even if we assume that some differences can be identified as determinants, the efficiency of this strategy in providing knowledge that can be generalized is relatively limited.” (Przeworski and Teune 1970, 34)

MDSD

An MDSD, however, takes place at a lower level and additionally does not look at systemic factors when explaining differences until this assumption gets falsified. In this design, the population is conceived a homogeneous group, and the first step of the research would be to identify independent variables (IV). Only if the IV and the dependent variable (DV) have similar relationships, then the systematic distinctions get considered. (Przeworski and Teune 1970, 34-35) To sum up, “the ‘most different systems’ design centers on eliminating irrelevant systemic factors.” (Przeworski and Teune 1970, 35)

Implications on the Outcome

Consequently, one of the most fundamental differences between the outcomes of an MSSD and an MDSD is the level of generalization. The outcome of an MDSD should be valid for any system and therefore it can be generalized; the result of an MSSD, on the other hand, can only be seen an encouragement for the possibility that the hypothesis tested could be true for other cases as well (Przeworski and Teune 1970, 38-39).

Therefore, the findings of the previous study will be crucial for choosing the research design. The results will determine whether this part should be conducted as an MSSD or an MDSD.

However, in both cases, the DV will be the change of the training and the, in chapter 3.2. developed hypotheses will constitute the IVs that the following chapter will test. Its purpose is to better understand the role training has in MFAs and why it is administered this way. The results of this examination might help not only to understand why countries manage it differently but also help with future concepts and strategies. Due to the scope of the paper and the limited resources, it will constitute a comparison of only two countries.

3.3.1. Case Selection

In order to make a revealing comparison, more detailed information is needed, and this limited the range of choice for the second part.

When looking at the results of chapter 2.3., it is apparent that change in the training of mid-career diplomats is happening. However, considering the fact that the questionnaire only managed to gain subjective information from the MFAs, it would have been hard to identify the ones suitable for an MSSD. Therefore, an MDSD is favorable; furthermore, as mentioned in box 5, this design makes it more likely to gain results that can be generalized.

However, an essential selection criterion is that the countries provide insights for the investigation and are as different as possible (Jahn 2006, 236). Therefore, the accessibility of information had influenced the case selection, which was also predicted by Prteowski and Teune. The two countries that seemed to be *most different* and where it was possible to gain the needed information were Austria and Finland. Table 6 shows the differences in the current handlings of their training for mid-career diplomats. Furthermore, it may also make a difference that the Austrian MFA had its own Diplomatic Academy, which is now an independent school, but close cooperation can still be assumed. Finland, on the contrary, never established a diplomatic academy and therefore had to take care of the further training of their employees all along.

Table 6: Comparison of the current practices in the Austrian MFA and the Finnish MFA

	Voluntary	Chosen by the MFA	Compulsory	Only internal	External only	A combination	Teaching format	Considered for posting	Not considered for posting	Similar for bi- and multilateral diplomats
	Obligation			Provider			Further Information			
Austria	✓	✓	✓		✓		O	✓		
Finland	✓	✓			✓		B		Y&N	

B = Blended Learning O = Only in Person Y&N = Yes & No ? = No Answer given

Source: Own representation bases on the completed questionnaires (Appendix C)

Table 6 shows that Austria not only offers training only in person but also has compulsory training for all their mid-career diplomats, whereas Finland implemented a blended learning training that does not include compulsory training for them. In terms of training providers, all the MFAs stated to rely on both, internal and external training courses and sessions. Also, the considerations of the completed training and the administration of bi- and multilateral training differ in these two countries.

When asked about the conducted changes and the planned changes for the future, they also show differences, as displayed in table 7.

Table 7: Comparison of the training changes in the Austrian MFA and the Finnish MFA

	Overall	In the Contents	In the Medium	In Obligations	Other changes	Adaption to I4.0*	Overall	In the Content	In the Medium	In Obligations	Other changes	Limited Resources	Undervalued Role	Diplomats' willingness	Bureaucracies	Others
	Active Changes since 2000						Planned future Changes						Expected Challenges			
Austria	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Finland	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓				

Source: Own representation bases on the completed questionnaires (Appendix C)

Another distinction is in the obligation of the training for mid-career diplomats. Austria not only changed the obligations in the past but also intend to do so in the future. Finland, on the other side, does not plan on changing their current situation and did not do so in the 21st century. The questionnaire also showed that, while both countries did not implement any not-mentioned changes since 2000, Finland plans to make some other changes in the future (see table 8).

Table 8: Intended other changes by the Finnish MFA

	Strategy	Vision	Goal
Finland	✓		✓

Source: Own representation based on Appendix C.f.

As mentioned above, it was not only the different answers to the questionnaire that qualified them for the MDSD. Another important aspect was that those two countries were willing to provide some further information that helps with testing the in chapter 3.2. derived hypothesis.

3.3.2. Methodology

Originally it was planned to set up a meeting, either in person or via a video call with the chosen countries to gain the required information. This way, it would have been more likely to get additional information that helps with gaining contextual insights. However, such a meeting only took place with Ms Birkstedt¹⁶. Since this meeting was quite early in the work process – on the 4th of March – follow-up emails were used to gather further information. For information on the Austrian mid-career diplomat's training only written exchange took place. Despite the ongoing COVID-19 crisis that hit Austria, was Ms Winkler¹⁷ able to answer some further questions. However, since it was not possible to meet in person and because of the additional flexibility, some questions were answered by means of a second questionnaire that is attached to the paper (see appendix D) and others by further communication via mail. Since the information are derived from interviews, communications, and published information, the study is a qualitative one. The two interviewees were firstly asked some

¹⁶ Ms Birkstedt is a counsellor of the unit for HR development and occupational wellbeing of the Finnish MFA.

¹⁷ Ms Winkler is part of the department of general personnel matters of the Austrian MFA.

follow-up questions on the answers they gave in the primary questionnaire; afterwards, both interviews followed the same interview guideline. Due to the rather open questions of the guide, the further course of conversation differed. However, this openness within the topic areas was intentional since the contextual information are essential for the study.

Due to the nature of the topic and the limited available information, the analysis will be interpretive; especially learning environments, and their impacts are hard to measure. Furthermore, qualitative research often depends on an iterative process; to a certain degree, this paper was able to carry out such an iterative procedure, but it is still only constituting a basic research. Therefore, its results are not meant to be final – which, besides, is not possible on the basis of the available information - but to identify plausible clausal connections that should undergo further in-depth research.

4. Empirical Study

For the empirical comparison of Austria and Finland, there will first be an overview of the contextual information on the two MFAs, e.g. the organigrams and the sizes. Afterwards, each of the three in chapter 3.2. produced hypothesis will be tested by using the gathered information. Finally, there will be a summary of the overall results found in the study, before the paper passes over to its conclusion and the outlook on desirable upcoming researches and suggestions.

4.1. Contextual Information

Austria and Finland constitute two somewhat comparable EU-countries, but despite some similarities, there are also loads of differences, for example, the structures of their MFAs. Regarding the personnel development departments, the organigram suggests that both MFAs have different areas of focus (see figure 11 appendix E and figure 12 appendix F). While both of them put all units that are HR-related in the administrative section, the subcategorization differs greatly.

Austria distinguishes between operative- and general personnel matters, that are then again broken down in smaller units. One of the six subcategories in the general personnel matters unit is called personnel development and section-internal coordination¹⁸, and they are – inter alia – responsible for the training within the MFA. (BMEIA¹⁹ n.d.)

Finland structured its administrative services differently. While not being visible on the in appendix F attached organigram, their homepage indicates that they subdivide it into five units where three of them are in the HR-area. They established a personnel unit, an HR unit, and a unit for HR development and occupational wellbeing; the latter includes the topics of further education and training of their employees. (Finnish MFA n.d.)

Another interesting aspect is the composition of the diplomatic corps. “The average Austrian ambassador is around 55 years of age” (Winkler 2020, see appendix D); whereas in

¹⁸ Translated from the German term: *Personalentwicklung, sektionsinterne Koordination*

¹⁹ The abbreviation of the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs; translated from the German *Bundesministerium für europäische und internationale Angelegenheiten*.

Finland “The average age of MFA staff (including admin and consular staff) is 48,3 years.” (Johanna Birkstedt, email message to author, June 4, 2020). Although the two statistical values are different since the Finnish one includes further staff, it can be seen as an indication that currently, the average Finnish diplomat is around the same age as the average Austrian one. However, developments show that this might be changing. Finland last recruited in 2018, and there the trend of applicants to become older was confirmed since they only had two that were under 30 (Birkstedt 2020), while Austria states that “new applicants usually range from early 20s to mid30s” (Winkler 2020, see appendix D).

This demographic information should be kept in mind when looking at the following comparisons since the age of the diplomatic body is not only likely to influence the MFAs digital skills but also its organizational culture. Younger people are often – but by far not always – more competent in dealing with technology and are able to learn quicker, especially in that context. Furthermore, it is easier to implement change within a firm that has more new employees since they may not yet have internalized the prevailing routines. For the context of MFAs, where there is a low turnover²⁰, the two characteristics often overlap because the newer employees are likely to be the younger ones. Therefore, MFAs are likely to face the challenge that their diplomats are on the one hand often not willing to change their long-standing routines and on the other hand might not be able to achieve a learning outcome that motivates them to actually change their habits.

The contextual settings of the MFAs will be considered when testing the hypothesis in the comparison below. Each of the hypothesis will be looked at separately since they are looking at the in chapter 3 explained different subcategories of organizational training. The training’s reputation will look not merely, but mainly, at the in-firm training situation, while the second hypothesis about the learning culture is more concerned about the MFAs operational training management. Finally, the developed theory on the MFAs adaptability comprises the circumstances of the overall in-firm education.

²⁰ Finland practically has no turnover at all (Birkstedt 2020).

4.2. Training's reputation

Hypothesis 1:

The importance and reputation of mid-career training within an MFA increases, if the ministry recognizes the quickly changing work-environment their diplomats are facing nowadays.

Generally, it is hard to identify the driver of development since often there is no single one. Therefore, it is important to note, that the causal connection, which is outlined in this hypothesis, is likely to be a decisive one, but it may not be the sole driving force. However, due to the scope of the paper, the analysis will not focus on finding the different drivers that increase the prestige and importance of training mid-career diplomats. It is much more about testing whether there is circumstantial evidence that the realization of the changing work environment impacts the training of mid-career diplomats.

When looking at the overall content-related changes in the interviewed countries (see table 1), all of them either already implemented some since 2000 or intend to do so in the future. It is likely that the content of the training changes due to the transformation of work tasks since otherwise, the previous content would have been sufficient. Therefore, this finding is already an indication for the validity of the hypothesis; however, to be sure it has to be looked at in more detail.

Ms Winkler (2020) stated in the open questionnaire that they “are planning to adapt the content to reflect new social/political/technical developments” (see appendix D), which shows that they are well aware of the changing work environment and the impact it has on the tasks of their diplomats. As examples for the new focuses, they list “subjects, such as AI, Science Diplomacy, and Cyber Security.” (Winkler 2020, see appendix 2020) In the original questionnaire, they stated that one of the expected challenges for the intended changes would be the undervalued role of training (see table 7). However, when asked about it in the follow-up questionnaire, they argued that “We are already experiencing a change in reputation which manifests itself in the higher value attributed to training nowadays compared to the past. This

has led and hopefully will further lead to more trainings being available ...” (Winkler 2020, see appendix D) Therefore, all the collected information suggests that at least in Austria, the presumed link between the changing work environment and the reputation of mid-career training exists. Nevertheless, the fact that the Austrian MFA (2020) stated that they expect the undervalued status of diplomats’ training to become a challenge (see appendix C.a.) suggests that they are still in the process of gaining the desired increased prestige. However, this causal relationship seems to be even more evident - and maybe even further developed - in the Finnish context.

The Finnish MFA (2020) pointed out in the original questionnaire that they “are trying out a pilot training especially designed for mid-career colleagues (10-15 years of experience)” (see appendix C.f.). In the conversation with Ms Birkstedt (2020), she explained that they identified different reasons that required a newly designed mid-career training opportunity. On the one hand, they see that the diplomatic career can be frustrating, especially after ten to fifteen years; and on the other hand, it is always helpful to deepen the knowledge about the profession itself and about Finland. Therefore, they started a pilot project that lasts for one year, where mid-career diplomats are able to attend voluntarily. During that year they will have different events as a group that should help them to learn more about what diplomacy is today and also, where they themselves stand at the moment and what they can do in the future. On the feedback and findings of this initial trial, they will put together the contents, methods, and schedules for next year’s execution.

Even though the increase of diplomatic professionalism is just one area that pilot project touches, it shows that Finland also realized the need to increase their mid-career diplomats’ understanding of today’s diplomacy, which is in favor of this research’s theory. Furthermore, Finland specified in the initial questionnaire they “have constantly developed the content of trainings offered, taking into account the changing needs and policy environment”, as well as that “the need to change and adopt the training will be a continuous challenge also in the future.” (Finnish MFA 2020, see appendix C.f.) Therefore, the fact that “training has been modified over the years to reflect evolving needs” (Johanna Birkstedt, email message to author, June 6, 2020), and that Finland does not see the undervalued status of the diplomat’s training as a challenge, further supports the hypothesis, that the training’s reputation increases if the changing work environment is recognized. Moreover, when asked about the status training has in the Finnish MFA nowadays, Ms Birkstedt (2020) stated that it is relatively

good and that the awareness of its importance increased greatly within the last 20 years, which constitutes further proof to the theory.

Additionally, is the finding that all of the surveyed MFAs changed or will change the content of their mid-career training, as mentioned above, supportive of DiMaggio and Powell's theory of organizational fields. Therefore, when considering the Central European MFAs as an organizational field, it can be assumed that the remaining ministries handle the mid-career training similar, especially because MFAs "participate[s] in a selected number of exchange practices with other EU countries" (Finnish MFA 2020, see appendix C.f.). Since content-related changes are a sign for the identification of new learning needs, it is a good indication for the realization of the changing work environment. This change might be related to the growing utilization of Nye's concept of *Soft Power*. Finland, for instance, argued that "the training is much more interactive and geared towards providing practical skills and tools for work than it used to be" (Finnish MFA 2020, see appendix C.f.) Such skills might be the learning of strategical public diplomacy that helps to generate power through being attractive; this would also fit together with Finland's training focus of increasing their mid-career diplomats' knowledge of the country they represent.

However, the results of the questionnaire in regards to the expected challenges still show a few countries that are still struggling with an undervalued role of diplomats' training (see table 1). Nevertheless, this may only be a sign of different positions in the realization process, as concluded in the Austrian case above. Belgium stated, as mentioned in chapter 2.3., that even if the role of training is currently still disputed in the MFA, the trend is towards a consensus that it is. Therefore, it is likely that some similar explanation may also be possible for the other countries that expect challenges due to the undervalued role. These different positions in the acknowledgment of the need for training may be explained by the OPM. The historical overview already showed that due to the different teaching approaches (see chapter 2.2.3.) the MFAs have quite different evolutions and hence, different points of departures for their training situation. Such differences, in combination with the varying structures of the MFAs, lead to very diverse organizational processes that may be one possible explanation for differing prestige training has in each MFA, which constitutes a deviation from DiMaggio and Powell's theory. Nevertheless, the trend shows that the theory of organizational fields seems applicable to MFA's training; particularly, because of the external training possibilities that are available for diplomats from different MFAs.

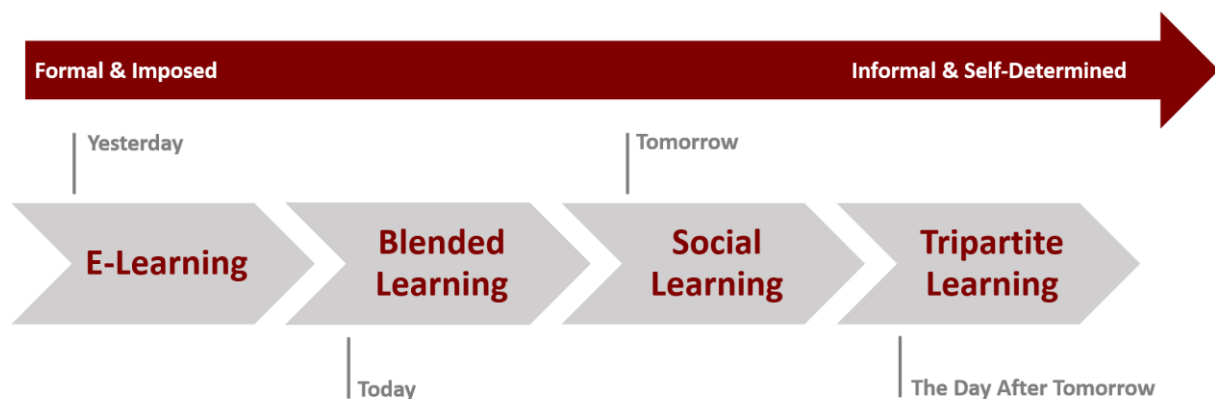
4.3. Learning Cultures

Hypothesis 2:

An MFA starts to focus more on the needs of the individual diplomat if it recognizes not only the need of mid-career training but also the methods and options that are possible these days.

Scholars from the private sector anticipate that in-firm learning will become much more integrated into the work-process, thanks to the technological developments that will not only enable it but will also enhance the efficiency of the individual learning processes (see chapter 3.2.). Sauter and Sauter (2013) looked at the different stages of development of in-firm training, as explained in chapter 3.2.; figure 9 shows the visualization of it (262). However, it is not possible to place the MFAs as a whole in the timeline since their current training situations differ, even though most of them stated that they already incorporated blended learning in their culture (see table 3). However, the correct allocation also depends on the factors of obligation and the formality or informality of the learning context.

Figure 9: Stages of Developments in the In-Firm Training



Source: Own representation based on Sauter and Sauter (2013, 262)

Austria's answers from the original questionnaire show that the MFA has all types of training obligations and uses both, external and internal training. However, regarding the internal training offers, they only have training in person so far; but they intend to implement changes in their obligations and used mediums, as tables 1 and 3 show. In the follow-up questionnaire, Ms Winkler (2020) wrote that they "are planning to broaden our training possibilities to include more digital options, e.g. E-Learning (MOOC)." (see appendix D) Furthermore, she claimed that "the Austrian Foreign Ministry is in the process of developing MOOCs for internal trainings, which should be available within the year." (see appendix D) For the changes in the obligation, their plan is "to add to the range of the, as of now few, obligatory trainings, to ensure an optimal preparation for our diplomats for their posts abroad." (see appendix D) This approach seems to target the specific preparation for the next posting of the diplomat; therefore, it is also important to look at the selection procedure for the postings and how the MFA decides between the applicants. Ms Winkler describes the process as follows: They publish the open positions in-house so that the interested diplomats that are available can apply for it. The selection criteria include previous experiences, personal suitability, family and business situation, as well as language skills. Applications are assessed by the Personnel Department and the General Secretariat; furthermore, the Staff Committee is involved in the decision-making. However, there is no collection platform which they can consult during this process. In order to ensure transparency, they publish anonymized statistics on applications, which show – amongst other things – how many applicants there were for a position, or how many men and women submitted their applications. (Katrin Winkler, email message to author, April 30, 2020)

Furthermore, the placement of the Austrian MFA in figure 9 also depends on the formality of the learning situation, which means that the exchange between diplomats and the rest of the staff within the MFA has to be considered as well. Bünger (2009) already included this in her understanding of the overall in-firm education (see chapter 3.). The Austrian MFA (2020) stated that their diplomats do not only communicate on channels provided by the MFA but also implemented their own, privately arranged communication channels (see appendix C.a.). However, they did not comment whether they are satisfied with the occurring exchange between their diplomats, or if they would desire a higher frequency of exchange between them. In the open questionnaire Ms Winkler (2020) clarified that "Diplomats would use channels facilitated by the MFA mostly for the exchange of work-related information and privately arranged channels for more informal, social occasions." (see appendix D) Moreover, the provided communication channels also include platforms that are open to everybody, but

“although these platforms are used for work-related communication rather than for seeking advice or exchanging experiences.” (see appendix D) Ms Winkler (2020) also stated that the MFA reckons that the establishment of privately arranged communication channels only takes place because of social reasons (see appendix D). Therefore, the whole learning environment for Austrian diplomats seems to have a rather formal context.

For these reasons, the Austrian MFA would be allocated in-between yesterday and today, as shown in figure 10 beneath. However, it is not clear if the timeline does not really represent the stages of development in the in-firm training of the Austrian MFA. Depending on the design and application of the upcoming MOOCs, it will be either closer to the E-Learning or the Blended Learning approach, but due to the limited available information, this cannot be ascertained. However, the rather formal learning setting, as well as the soon increased amount of compulsory training, tends the allocation more to the left side of the timeline.

Finland stated in the questionnaire that they only have two types of training sessions, the ones that can be attended on a voluntary basis and the ones where the MFA chooses the participants. They explained that “The MFA organizes many types of regular training ... Some of these are in preparation of postings abroad, some are not” (Finnish MFA 2020 see appendix C.f.). However, they did not state whether the training will be considered for postings, or not (see table 6). When asked about the Finnish selection procedure, it seems to be similar to the Austrian one. While “Most of the postings are filled in this way, ... there are always some that need more discussions and “head-hunting” in-house”, according to (Johanna Birkstedt, email message to author, June 6, 2020). Ms Birkstedt (2020) also explained that generally it is rather short term and that their focus is on preparation. However, she also stated that “In recent years, the decision-making procedures have been developed, to make them more effective and efficient. The development tools for creating a ‘portfolio’ for candidates for positions is one part of this that is ongoing.” (Johanna Birkstedt, email message to author, June 6, 2020)

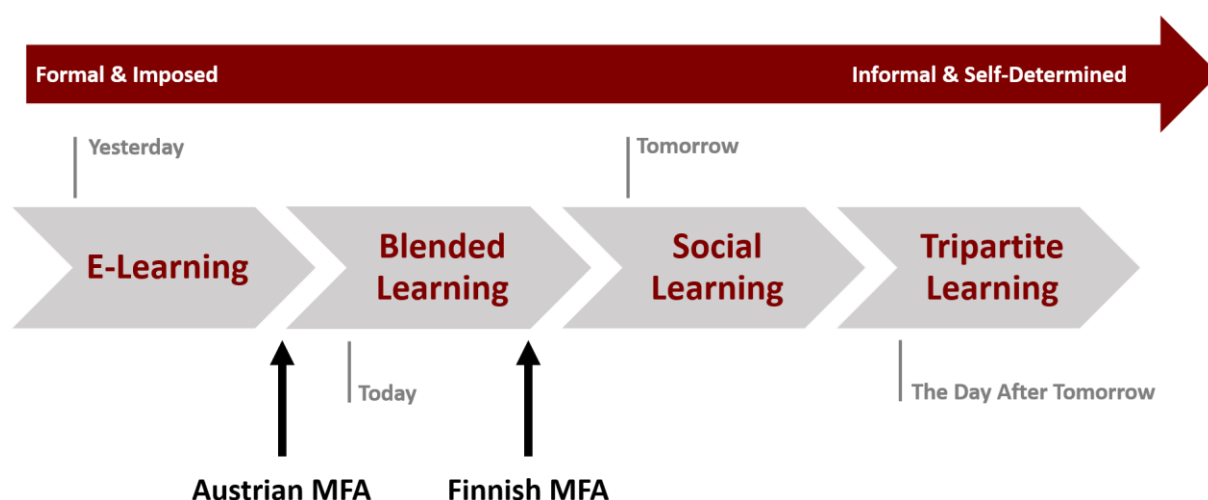
In contrast to Austria did Finland declare that they already have blended learning arrangements in their MFA (see table 6). Ms Birkstedt later explained that the “Introduction of other forms of training than class-room type training is another general trend (online trainings, webinars...)” (email message to author, June 6, 2020) Furthermore, they mentioned their pilot training, that has already been discussed in chapter 4.2., which is voluntarily and should help the participants with their career path and to adapt to recent developments that took place in diplomacy. Since the pilot is voluntary, it also shows that the Finnish MFA has a

different approach to the obligations of training. Finland not only has no compulsory training sessions for mid-career diplomats, but they also do not plan on changing that (Finnish MFA 2020, see appendix C.f.)

The formality of the learning in Finland seems to be blended too. In the questionnaire, the Finnish MFA (2020) stated that “the MFA organizes a number of trainings which also provide an opportunity to meet colleagues, catch up and exchange views. Naturally many people are also in contact with each other in a private capacity.” (see appendix C.f.) While the last sentence is probably true for any MFA, it seems like the Finnish one tries to enable and encourage the informal exchange through their formal training arrangements and designs.

Therefore, it looks like Finland is already moving towards the Social Learning stage of tomorrow, as visualized in figure 10. The fact that they already use a Blended Learning approach and that they seem to start supporting and facilitate both, formal and informal learning settings, shows that Finland already is in today’s in-firm development stage according to Sauter and Sauter (2013).

Figure 10: The In-Firm Training Development Stage of the Austrian and the Finnish MFA



Source: Own representation based on Sauter und Sauter (2013, 262)

Figure 10 shows the allocation of the Austrian and the Finnish MFA in the by Sauter and Sauter (2013) suggested timeline. However, even if the overall evolution seems to represent the Finnish path, it looks as if Austria’s path differs from it. Furthermore, the comparison indicates that the start of the timeline, as it is now, might not be suitable for MFAs. The analysis of the two countries and the results of the other MFAs (see table 3) suggest that the stage of E-Learning does not seem to be desired for diplomats. The collected

data indicates that MFAs are more likely to go from training that takes place only in person to a blended learning arrangement; however, this finding should be looked at in more detailed and with more precise information on the MFAs' intentions and goals.

The allocation of the MFAs already gives a first impression on how much of today's technology they actually make use of. Austria seems to only start taking advantage of the available opportunities, while Finland already seems to be on the edge of tomorrow, where the next step would be to implement social learning as explained in chapter 3.2. in box 4. However, regarding the hypothesis that is tested here, it is not clear whether the use of technological enhancements really leads to a more individual training focus.

Ms Winkler (2020) stated that "the MFA provides, enables and advertises a range of different courses, which are partly organized or provided by other federal institutions ... where staff of the MFA may enroll for various sorts of trainings, from language classes to leadership workshops" (see appendix D), when asked about lifelong learning within the MFA. However, that is the provided information that is closest to touching the individual learning needs of their mid-career diplomats. In Finland, they stated that "The training supply is constantly being reviewed and fine-tuned against the identified needs and demand and the feed-back received from present courses." (Finnish MFA 2020, see appendix C.f.) Nevertheless, this only shows that the content gets adapted to the overall learning needs, not necessarily to each individuals' deficits. Ms Birkstedt (2020) stated that lifelong learning is in the nature of being a diplomat and happens at least unconsciously in the context, especially because of the changing work postings. However, she also explained that it is hard for the MFA to provide the right learning tools that support lifelong learning.

To sum up, it cannot be said for sure if the use of available learning technology leads to a greater focus on the individual learner's needs. Nevertheless, the fact that all surveyed MFAs but two²¹, declared that they have training sessions where they choose the diplomat's who have to attend the training (see table 3) already shows that the trend moves into the anticipated direction of focusing on the individual's needs. However, also in this aspect, there should be further research made to identify, whether these training sessions only consist of preparatory courses that are specific to the diplomat's next postings, or if they also include training with more general content.

²¹ There, it would be interesting to look at the outsider and find out why Italy and Slovenia both do not have training sessions where they choose the participants themselves.

4.4. MFAs' Adaptability

Hypothesis 3:

If the learning culture of an MFA enables and fosters self-learning skills and organizational learning, it could become more agile in general – similar to the organizations of the private sector.

Even though chapter 4.3. showed that the individual's learning needs do not seem to be the main focus within the two MFAs; it will be still interesting to test the third hypothesis. The results - even if potentially rather hypothetical - should indicate whether focusing on the individual's learning needs would be beneficial for the MFAs' adaptability.

Generally, it is always hard to analyze a learning culture from an outsider point of view. For this research, it is even more challenging since the available information is quite limited, and because the provided information is given solely by employees that work in the training departments. Therefore, it lacks perceptions and impressions from mid-career diplomats. However, this basic research will determine if it is worth to conduct an in-depth study that proves if the establishment of a learning MFA would help to increase its overall adaptability.

The in hypothesis 3 examined impact of self-learning skills and a learning culture that enables organizational learning is closely related to Stopp and Kirschten's categorization of PD strategies and Graf et al.'s Sweet Spot of Learning (see chapter 3.2.). Table 5 shows the values of agile learning that should help an organization or in this case, an MFA, to become more adaptable. Graf et al. (2017) reported that the agile values originated in the context of a software development project in 2011. After completing a project whose outcome became redundant during its creation process, some experts decided that the whole procedure of software development has to change. Until then, the client told the developers what product he wants to have, and then they also discussed all the requirements and challenges. However, this meant that all the changes that happened up to the completion of the project had no more influence on the project. Therefore, there is a high risk that the final product is already outdated, or in the worst case already redundant, upon completion. That is why the mentioned experts developed the agile manifesto, which ensured an adaptable and customer-oriented

type of programming. (30) Graf et al. then recognized its potential for the training context and derived the in table 5 displayed values from it. They believe that an organization can become more flexible if its learning culture embraces these values. However, to get this desired outcome, the PD strategy has to be adapted as well. Furthermore, the learners themselves – in this case, the employees – need a matching mindset that motivates them to keep learning and the skills that enable them to do so independently, which Euler refers to as self-learning competencies (see chapter 3.2.).

It is important to the Austrian MFA to promote the learning motivation of their employees. Therefore, they try to identify which learning interests the individuals have in appraisal interviews, and then they promote the respective learning measure if they match the from the MFA desired competencies. (Katrin Winkler, email message to author, June 2, 2020) The fact that they look at what training content is beneficial for the organization and the development of the employees themselves indicates that the Austrian MFA employs at least an expended PD strategy according to Stopp and Kirschten (see table 4). Depending on the subsequent interaction, it may also be a broadly sensed PD, but this cannot be said for sure based on the available information. Nevertheless, even if the for the broadly sensed PD needed interaction is happening within the MFA, it would still only be in the transition process from expanded to broadly sensed PD since the interaction does not seem to constitute a separate aim of the PD strategy.

Furthermore, it means that they also make use of the in figure 8 visualized *Sweet Spot of Learning*. The appraisal interviews are used to find the learning content that is desired by the organization and the individual. Additionally, the MFA also takes the learning needs that are derived from the organizational context into consideration as their changes in training content show. Chapter 4.2. already discussed the fact that Ms Winkler drew attention to the fact that they are focusing on reflecting contextual developments in their training content (see appendix D). However, even though the MFA considers the learning needs of all three determinants, it is decisive on how they weigh the significances of each of them to ensure that they hit the *Sweet Spot of Learning*. It is only possible to weigh all three factors evenly if the employees declare their learning needs and interests, and this again also depends on the diplomat's learning motivation. When asked about the motivation and commitment of Austrian diplomats and how it changes over time, Ms Winkler (2020) stated that “How this change may look, will likely differ from individual to individual.” (see appendix D) This answer demonstrates that the MFA is not only aware of the role the diplomat's learning

attitude plays for their training but also that they bear it in mind when talking about the PD strategy. Therefore, it is probable that they do not subordinate the person's learning needs to the needs of the organization and its context. Moreover, because Ms Winkler also explained that employees have the opportunity to take the initiative and to apply to the responsible department for the promotion of a self-chosen further training measure which seems relevant to them (Katrin Winkler, email message to author, June 2, 2020). Although diplomats have the opportunity to apply for not offered further training, it would be much more interesting to see how many of them take advantage of this offer. Only employees whose skills include self-learning competencies are able to recognize their learning needs since this is one of the three behavioral dimensions that Euler outlines (see chapter 3.2.). Hence, when trying to examine the dissemination of self-learning skills, the application for further training would constitute an interesting indicator that is easy to collect.

These findings support the results of the previous chapter; The Austrian MFA generally seems to start with shifting their PD focus onto the needs of their employees. Nevertheless, they do not seem to focus on their flexibility by doing so since their in-firm eventually tends to be imposed on the diplomats, albeit being discussed before. The by Graf et al. suggested values of agile learning (see table 5) all seem to exist in the Austrian MFA; however, they do not seem to have the necessary relevance for an agile learning culture. The provided information gives the impression that only the functioning offers are more important than the actual test results and obtained certificates. The learning culture of the Austrian MFA therefore would have to become much more self-determined if the overall organization wants to increase its flexibility. This means that the focus on the employees learning needs does not merely need to increase; it has to become more important than the bureaucratic processes in order to become agile.

The discussion in the previous chapters already showed that the approach of the Finnish MFA to its in-firm training differs from the Austrian MFA, especially with respect to the obligational aspect; however, there are also similarities. The Finnish MFA, for instance, also considers the individual's learning needs, they discuss them “annually in each employee's performance review and feedback discussions.” (Johanna Birkstedt, email message to author, June 4, 2020) However, the process of joining a training session looks different in the Finnish MFA. They not only do without compulsory training (see table 6); they also announce the upcoming training sessions. “Most training opportunities (e.g. specific trainings abroad) are advertised to the whole staff and everybody can apply for them, and the

participants are chosen on the basis of their current and future career prospects, and taking into consideration their needs for enhancing those particular skills.” (Johanna Birkstedt, email message to author, June 4, 2020) These application processes mean that the candidates decide for themselves whether they would like to attend a training session or not. To some degree, this procedure makes their training a bit more self-determined, which probably constitutes the main difference between the Austrian and Finnish MFAs. Given the provided information, it is as if the Finnish MFA otherwise handles the training of mid-career diplomats quite similar to the Austrians. According to Stopp and Kirschten’s categorization of PD strategies, Finland would also be allocated in the expanded PD since they did not mention the interaction either. However, it can also not be said for sure if it may not already count to the broadly sensed PD from outside.

The introduction of their pilot project (see chapter 4.2.) proves that they try to combine the organization’s needs with the learning needs of their diplomats and the contextual developments. Furthermore, “People are also encouraged to consider their own learning needs and make proposals on that basis.” (Johanna Birkstedt, email message to author, June 4, 2020) This means that the Finnish MFA does not only choose the best matching and most promising diplomat for the available training place, they also check whether the desired training is suitable with the needs of the organization and the contextual developments. Therefore, it can be assumed that the Finnish MFA too makes use of the by Graf et al. labelled *Sweet Spot of Learning* (see figure 8). Nevertheless, it is more likely that the Finnish MFA weighs all three aspects evenly since they do not offer compulsory training at all. Hence, it suggests that they look at their diplomats’ learning needs on a more individual basis.

According to the given information, the learning culture of the Finnish MFA seems to be more agile than the Austrian one. However, also in the Finnish one, it is not clear which side of table 5 is more important, especially regarding the support of the individual learning processes. Ms Birkstedt stated that they have annual appraisal talks; however, yearly talks do not really incorporate short term changes. This raises the impression that in this aspect, the Finnish MFA still sees the defined values and methods as more important. Nevertheless, the MFA tries “to design trainings in a way that makes them as interesting and motivating as possible.” (Johanna Birkstedt, email message to author, June 4, 2020) Further research should be done with respect to their needed response time for adapting their training to short-term changes. Based on the available information, the values of agile learning are therefore not fully integrated into the learning culture of the Finnish MFA. However, the given answers and the overall direction suggest that it moves into this direction.

To conclude, it looks as if both MFAs laid the foundations for an agile learning culture. The OPM probably best explains why they are not able to fully incorporate the values in their PD strategy. It might not be possible for MFAs to let their diplomats decide for themselves when and what they should learn since their work has a huge impact on the foreign relations, even though motivational theories state that self-determined learning would be not only more efficient and the results would last longer.

The implemented processes, which are related to training, not only allow the respective departments to organize everything efficiently, but they also have a control function. If training is compulsory, the MFA can be sure that each diplomat is familiar with the content of it. However, preparing a compulsory course takes a lot of time and effort, and considering that some of the diplomats might already know its objectives, it seems as if all the used resources were used inefficiently, especially if it has to be adapted each year before it can take place. This shows that there is a trade-off between ensuring that every diplomat gets all the necessary information and trusting that diplomats take care of it themselves. The ensuring and controlling of the learning environment is another potential influence that hinders adaptability and organizational learning. If diplomats would have to make sure to get the needed competencies and skills for themselves, they are likely to make more use of informal learning. Chapter 4.3. briefly touched the informal learning situation and concluded that both MFAs do not exploit its full potential, which validates Rana's point that MFAs undervalue mutual learning that takes place within groups (see chapter 3.1.2.). Therefore, MFAs would have to provide them with the adequate and needed communication and exchange channels or platforms. It is likely that knowledge spreads faster across the MFAs if the exchange among diplomats increases. If diplomats then use their network for mutual learning, then the MFA would become more adaptable.

4.5. Evaluation and Results

Although only the first hypothesis was fully verified, the empirical study showed that MFAs follow the training concepts and theories of the private sector to some degree, knowingly or not. In total, it seems as if the training developments in the private sector impact the training of mid-career diplomats as well. However, the concepts cannot simply be transferred into the diplomatic context. Especially because "For the public sector it is often as important not to fail as it is to succeed", as the European Commission (2013, 30) wrote in

their report. This requirement of no failure and the need for secure communication might be a reason for the hesitant attitude towards technological enhancements and developments, as the Belgian MFA touched upon in its questionnaire (see appendix C.b.). Nevertheless, it is obvious that the diplomatic context itself is changing at a fast pace, and the training might soon be not able to keep up with it. Since changing learning habits takes much time, MFAs need to initiate changes in their learning culture soon, if they did not do so yet. Diplomats in their mid-careers are the best choice for adapting the learning environment. On the one hand, there is enough time left to monitor the learning success in long-term and compare it to previous years since they are likely to keep working as diplomats. On the other hand, their basic knowledge is ensured, due to their already completed initial training at the beginning of their career. Therefore, the risk that a mid-career diplomat misses out of learning about essential competencies and skills is lower, and the PD has more room for change.

The underlying ideas of the training concepts that were developed in the private sector fit the public sector as well. Nevertheless, adaptations seem necessary due to the peculiar working context of diplomats.

First of all, it is much more important for a diplomat to remain a generalist than to become a specialist since a diplomat has to see the bigger picture. Secondly, diplomats do not pursue a concretely defined goal as most other employees do. Of course, they have to represent the country to their best ability; however, it is not quite like the earlier days, when they had detailed work orders and defined objectives. That makes it even more important that diplomats have a well-rounded and broad education, which they can draw on. Moreover, diplomats need well developed interpersonal competencies as the bureaucratic politics model demonstrates. According to Welch, Diplomats have to understand the ‘political gamesmanship’ and its different operational procedures compared to private organizations (see chapter 3.1.1.).

However, it also explains Murray’s (1856) statement that “The fate of nations very often hangs on the judicious conduct of a diplomatist.” (43-44) Moreover, Murray argues that the work outcome of a diplomat therefore greatly depends on the diplomat’s confidence (43-44), and one’s confidence relies strongly on the preparation, e.g. the training. However, on the individual level, this means that the best strategy depends on the diplomat’s strengths and weaknesses, which makes it hard to predict which competencies and skills will be needed and therewith highlight the need to focus more on the individual’s learning needs, similar to the developments in the private sector.

Furthermore, this transformation of focus on the individual's needs might also help with the learning motivation of mid-career diplomats.

Ms Birkstedt said that the Finnish MFA considers training generally as a motivation enhancer (email message to author, June 4, 2020), what can be seen from the newly introduced pilot project for mid-career diplomats (see chapter 4.2.). Furthermore, their training obligations match Deci and Ryan's SDT. As discussed in chapter 3.2., the SDT argues that learning works best if the learner himself makes the decision to educate oneself further in this matter. Both MFAs discuss the diplomat's interests and training needs in their appraisal interviews, which already is compatible with the SDT. However, the Finnish MFA additionally does not have any compulsory training sessions for mid-career diplomats. As explained in chapter 4.4., the MFA posts upcoming training sessions and then chooses the participants from the received applications. This process ensures that all chosen participants are intrinsically motivated and therewith is likely to result in a better learning outcome than if the training is imposed on the diplomat. The SDT therefore also explains the in figure 9 visualized development stages of the PD. Taking advantage of the available technology does not only provide an opportunity to learn regardless of the location, it also allows for self-determination as the arrow on top of the timeline shows. Integrating more technology into the learning processes of MFAs, such as the upcoming MOOC of the Austrian MFA (see chapter 4.3.), is thus also likely to increase the self-determination of diplomats in this regard and therewith, according to the SDT, increase their motivation to learn.

Furthermore, according to Deci and Ryan, the learning success can be supported by external factors that help increase the learner's intrinsic learning motivation. Ms Birkstedt argued that their "aim is to design trainings in a way that makes them as interesting and motivating as possible." In this context she mentioned that "Gamification has been used in many in-house trainings", and that "a lot of emphasis is put on wellbeing at the workplace, and this is one of the things that are addressed also in the mid-career training." (Johanna Birkstedt, email message to author, June 4, 2020) Gamification is used in various contexts nowadays, especially in learning contexts. Sailer et al. (2017) define it as „the process of making activities in non-game contexts more game-like by using game design elements.“ (372) This means that the training creator implements the elements of games that are responsible for its addictiveness. This way, they can make their training more playful and stimulating while still keeping it educational. In the private sector firms implement their overall PD programs into a gamification concept, this way they are able to increase social learning and at the same time they can take advantage of the competitiveness that encourages their employees to keep

learning. Hence, further research should be made in order to see how the Finnish MFA uses gamification, and generally, if more MFAs take advantage of game design elements in their PD.

One other main challenge that both MFAs mentioned was the limited time. The Austrian MFA stated in the questionnaire that one expected challenge for implementing the intended training changes are the limited available resources (see table 7). When asked about it in the follow-up questionnaire, Ms Winkler (2020) explained that “The lack of resources is mostly due to general scarceness of time available to complete trainings” (see appendix D); also Ms Birkstedt (2020) mentioned in the initial interview that limited time is an issue for the training of mid-career diplomats. However, time is also a scarce resource in the private sector, which is why scholars envision the Learning Partner Computer and DDOs (see chapter 3.2.). The concept of tripartite learning is favorable, because of the time-efficiency on the one hand and the resource-conserving individual tutoring on the other hand. The Learning Partner Computer, when incorporated and programmed, constitutes an easy way to integrate learning into the work process which dissolves the trade-off between learning how to become more efficient at work and just keep working without taking out time to attend training sessions. This concept of making use of the technology’s capabilities would also be beneficial for the training within MFAs (see also chapter 4.3.).

DDOs evolved out of the fact that “most people at work, even in high-performing organizations, divert considerable energy every day to a second job that no one has hired them to do: preserving their reputations, putting their best selves forward, and hiding their inadequacies from others and themselves.” (Kegan et al. 2014) Furthermore, they argue that “this is the single biggest cause of wasted resources in nearly every company today.” (Kegan et al. 2014) The idea of a DDO is that people consider their weaknesses as a learning opportunity, which means they have to be able to make mistakes and openly work on them. While some errors can be forgiven in the private sector, it may be different for public organizations. Diplomats represent their home countries externally; however, internally, they would have the opportunity to talk about their doings within their MFAs and discuss potential mistakes in order to learn from them and each other.

Such an informal learning practice would also enable social learning to take place within the MFA. Knowledge could be spread throughout an MFA if it, for instance, provides a platform

for all diplomats, where everybody has their own profiles that display all their skills and competencies, and that can be used for chats, discussions, and rallies. This would enable diplomats to securely discuss open questions and access the organizational knowledge. Furthermore, diplomats could use the platform to look for a person with the needed skills and contact them directly rather than asking around; and they could also use it to exchange best practices and discuss new ideas.

Moreover, according to Ms Birkstedt, the Finnish MFA is currently developing a portfolio that should help make the selection procedure for open positions more efficient; and the Austrian MFA does not seem to have a similar tool in place either (see chapter 4.3.). This suggests not only that the whole application process is also very time-consuming for everyone involved, but also that the allocation of existing skills within the MFAs is not straightforward. Hence, the proposed tool could also be beneficial in that regard since the candidate's profile could become part of the application.

The undertaken study shows that the MFAs see the importance of training their mid-career diplomats. However, it also showed that they do not make use of all the opportunities technological developments offer. Private organizations are forced to continuously develop and innovate to survive, for MFAs survival can be considered a given. Nevertheless, their success depends on the skills and competencies of their employees. For both cases, it is essential to have adequately trained and engaged staff. However, this difference between them explains the pressure of private firms to promptly adapt their in-firm education to contextual developments. It is likely that the combination of having a secured existence and not being allowed to fail slowed down the change process in MFAs. Public organizations have to be careful when incorporating new technology; they have to be sure that it is safe. Therefore, they miss out on a lot of possibilities, also in the learning context. It is unclear how the informal learning context looks like, it can definitely be further promoted by the MFA, if they start recognizing its impact and usefulness. However, for now they only follow an expanded PD strategy, whose focus is to foster their employees, with some additional features of the broadly sensed PD. A holistic organizational development by means of a broadly sensed PD is not yet possible with the tools currently used. Nevertheless, when looking at the available literature and scholarly work from the private sector, it seems as if MFAs are headed in a similar direction.

5. Conclusion and Outlook

This basic research consisted of two parts. Firstly, the paper conducted a descriptive analyses of the current mid-career training situation diplomats face in Central European MFAs. Secondly, it compared two of the MFAs in an MDSD in order to identify causal explanations for their training measures. Furthermore, it also compared their in-firm training situation to the training developments of the private sector.

The historical development of the diplomatic work showed that the tasks of envoys drastically changed over time. In earlier times they were viewed as nothing more than living letters that should enable faster communication and negotiation. However, over time their work scope increased, and with it also the competencies and skill requirements for diplomatic envoys; only in the Byzantium Empire training finally became institutionalized. During modern times two main trends emerged; the French and the Austrian teaching style. While the French style mainly relied on teaching diplomatic methods that previously were proven to be successful, followed the Austrian style a rather modern approach that also incorporated current developments. When looking at the current training situation in Central European MFAs, it becomes obvious that the hybrid Austrian teaching style prevailed in the long term. This finding affirms that the fast-paced developments that take place nowadays cannot be neglected in the training of diplomats.

In order to obtain a rough overview of the training situation mid-career diplomats are facing in the 21st century, a short questionnaire was sent out to thirty MFAs of Central European countries. Eighteen countries reacted to the inquire; however, two of them were not able to answer the questionnaire due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. The remaining sixteen MFAs all stated that they not only made changes in their mid-career training for diplomats but also intend to do so in the future. Nevertheless, this result may not be generalized for all Central European MFAs since the data collection method may have led to a sample selection bias; therefore, a more comprehensive further research is needed.

Moreover, it is not possible to compare the training situations of the MFAs with each other based on the results of the questionnaire. On the one hand, only subjective impressions were collected as the questionnaire did not provide any measurements or indicators for answering the questions. On the other hand, induced by historical evolution, there was no common starting point for the MFAs training situation.

Nevertheless, the evaluation of the questionnaire showed that changes in the content, and regarding the used medium are the most common ones.

Most countries already implemented some of them since the beginning of the 21st century; nevertheless, a lot of them are still intending to keep making further changes or start doing so in the future. The fact that nearly all of the surveyed MFAs declared that they plan to have content-related changes further validates the theory that the developments in the diplomatic context have an impact on the training situation for mid-career diplomats. However, it would be interesting to examine the Croatian and Luxembourgian MFAs further as they are the only ones who did not mention any planned changes in the content.

The changes in the used medium are hard to interpret since the starting point of MFAs is not clear. MFAs can either try to implement interactive online learning tools or MOOCs, such as the Austrian MFA for instance; they can also only now start to upload reading material in order to enable online learning; or they might have already been on top of the developments before the beginning of the 21st century, so that their used mediums were already changed before the year 2000. However, the fact that nearly all MFAs indicated changes in their medium, in combination with the majority use of blended learning arrangements shows that MFAs are at least in the process of including technology in their training configurations.

Furthermore, it also showed that most MFAs expect the limited resources to be one of the challenges that will come up when trying to change their training for mid-career diplomats. However, unexpectedly this does not seem to be due to an undervalued role training plays within the MFA. Therefore, it would be interesting to see which kind of resources they expect to lack; whether it is time, money or human resources. Additionally, it would also be interesting to have a closer look at the challenges the Belgian, Italian and Slovenian MFAs are facing since they stated in their questionnaires that they did not yet manage to adapt their training situation to the industry 4.0.

Moreover, the evaluation of the questionnaire showed that nearly all MFAs offer training sessions for mid-career diplomats, where they choose the participants. It is not clear from the provided information if the MFAs only include direct preparatory courses for the next postings of the diplomats, or if they also choose the participants for training offers with more general contents. The Finnish MFA, for instance, mentioned that diplomats apply for the available spots in the offered training and are then chosen based on their application. The

exact selection process affects the learning motivation of the chosen diplomats, according to Deci and Ryan's SDT; therefore, further information about it would be interesting. Generally, it would be interesting to analyze the motivational impacts on the different types of training obligations.

Finally, the analysis of the responses to the questionnaire also indicated that MFAs do not seem to pay much attention to informal learning situations.

When asked about the communication among their own diplomats, some MFAs were not sure whether they understood the question correctly. This may be a sign that the question was poorly formulated; however, the fact that some of the MFAs seem to have understood it correctly suggests otherwise. A possible explanation for the confusion could be that the MFAs are simply not aware of the impact informal learning can have on the development of organizations. Furthermore, most MFAs stated that they consider the exchange between their diplomats as adequate. However, when looking at the private sector, it creates the impression as if there is no adequate amount of exchange and that a higher frequency should always be desired. Hence, further studies on the informal learning situations of mid-career diplomats should be made.

While external training offers are, to a great extent similar for all MFAs, it often is not targeted at the specific needs of the individual MFAs; therefore, MFAs started to provide their own training sessions. The comparison between the Austrian and the Finnish MFAs showed that they overall have similar aims but use different approaches. However, the comparison to the scholarly works of the private sector furthermore showed that the in-firm training within those MFAs has not yet exhausted all its possibilities.

The Austrian MFA is allocated in the past when arranging it in Sauter and Sauter's timeline of PD stages. This is also due to the rather formal learning context and the often imposed upon training sessions. The approach of the Finnish MFA; however, led to an allocation in the now on Sauter and Sauter's timeline. This can be explained by their blended learning arrangements and the rather self-determined learning situation, which their mid-career diplomats face. However, it would be interesting to further investigate if the timeline is compatible with the development stages of the MFAs as it is. The study revealed that MFAs either already have blended learning arrangements in place, or that they only have training

sessions in person; but there was not one MFA that offered only online learning to their diplomats. Hence, it is very likely that the e-learning stage of the timeline is not match this context.

The second part of the paper furthermore showed that if MFAs would take advantage of the available technology, they could further individualize their training offers just like private organizations do. This individualization of training would then lead to a more efficient and effective learning environment, and according to scholars, this would make the organization more flexible and adaptive. However, security issues, limited resources, and organizational processes seem to slow down these changes.

Generally, there are two popular conceptions of learning organizations, a DDO and the organizations that use a so-called Learning Partner Computer. Even though the concept of DDOs is not applicable in all work areas of a diplomat, its basic idea should be followed for internal communications and exchanges. Diplomats should not only be able to show their weaknesses and admit their mistakes; they should be eager to do so because they see it as an opportunity to grow. The from Erpenbeck and Sauter envisioned integration of a Learning Partner Computer, should also be considered by MFAs. A tripartite learning environment would be beneficial for mid-career diplomats and the MFAs themselves, as it increases efficiency and enables diplomats to learn directly on the job. However, firstly MFAs have to adapt their informal learning context to enable social learning and become a learning organization; only then they can reach *the day after tomorrow* in Sauter and Sauter's timeline.

Overall, this basic research showed that MFAs have different approaches to their in-firm training situations, despite being in an organizational field. However, it also proofed that MFAs can benefit from the training theories and concepts of the private sector; however, it also discovered, that adjustments have to be made when transferring them to organizations in the public sector. Therefore, further research should be made on how to adequately adapt the training theories and concepts of the private sector. Nevertheless, MFAs are then responsible for applying the adapted theories and concepts to their own context since the analysis of learning cultures are always difficult from the outside. Learning cultures depend on various factors; therefore, they not only look differently in every organization, they also have to be changed differently if the change process should be successful.

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Appendix

A.	Backgrounds of Resident Ambassadors	89
B.	Questionnaire for MFAs	90
C.	Completed Questionnaires.....	92
(a)	Austria	92
(b)	Belgium	94
(c)	Croatia.....	96
(d)	Czech Republic	98
(e)	Estonia.....	100
(f)	Finland.....	102
(g)	France.....	104
(h)	Ireland	106
(i)	Italy	108
(j)	Luxembourg	110
(k)	Portugal.....	112
(l)	Romania	114
(m)	Slovakia	116
(n)	Slovenia.....	118
(o)	Sweden.....	120
(p)	Switzerland.....	122
D.	Completed Follow-up Questionnaire for the Austrian MFA	124
E.	Organigram of the Austrian MFA	127
F.	Organigram of the Finnish MFA	128

A. Backgrounds of Resident Ambassadors

Table 9: Characteristics of Resident Ambassadors by countries

Country	Descent	Portrayal
Netherlands	All walks of life	No effective day-to-day management
England	Modest decent	Generally competent
France	Nobles of lower rank	Good in seizing strategic opportunities
Spain	Nobles	Well-reputed diplomatic skills
Venetia	Members of leading families	Voluminous (and sometimes irrelevant) reporting

Source: Own representation based on Bjola and Kornprobst (2019, 25)

B. Questionnaire for MFAs

Veronika Bramböck | veronika.bramboeck@da-vienna.at | +43 (0)650 6233 031 | Moosen 3, 6233 Kramsach, Austria

Questionnaire on the training of mid-career diplomats

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer this questionnaire for my master thesis at the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna.

With my thesis, I aim to examine the learning environment mid-career diplomats are facing nowadays. This means that I will be looking at the training arrangements career diplomats encounter after their initial training phases.

Furthermore, I will investigate whether there is a visible trend within the MFAs regarding the transformation of their training and if those observations are comparable to the changes in the private sector, where more and more firms and organizations focus on the learning needs of their staff and try to help implement a lifelong learning culture.

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The questions are followed by possible response options, where you can simply tick the fitting answers. However, if there is no suitable answer available, or if you wish to clarify or extend your answer, please do not hesitate to use the comments boxes beneath the respective questions.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Country:

1) How does the exchange of your diplomats among each other look like?

☐ Channels facilitated by the MFA are available

☐ Only by privately arranged ones

☐ There is an adequate amount of exchange

☐ A higher frequency of exchange is desired

☐ Other (please specify in further comments)

Comments:

2) How does your training for mid-career diplomats look like?

☐ Voluntary

☐ Chosen by the MFA

☐ Compulsory

☐ Only provided by external providers

☐ Only in-house training is provided

☐ A combination of both

☐ Similar for everybody

☐ Distinguishes between bi- and multilateral Diplomats

☐ Only in person

☐ Only online learning

☐ Blended learning

☐ Considered for diplomat's postings

☐ Not considered for diplomat's postings

Comments:

3) Was the training situation actively changed or adapted to new developments within the last 20 years?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ The content

☐ The used medium

☐ The obligations

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Did it adapt to the industry 4.0?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

4) Are any changes planned in the future?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what kind of changes?

☐ Content-related changes

☐ Medium-related changes

☐ Obligational changes

☐ Changes in strategy

☐ Changes in its goal

☐ Changes in its vision

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

If yes, what are the expected challenges?

☐ The limited available resources

☐ The undervalued status of diplomats' training

☐ Diplomats' own willingness to change

☐ Bureaucracies that hinder change

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

3

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

5) Further comments and remarks

4

C. Completed Questionnaires

(a) Austria

Date received: 11.03.2020

Veronika Bramböck | veronika.bramboeck@da-vienna.at | +43 (0)650 6233 031 | Moosen 3, 6233 Kramsach, Austria

Questionnaire on the training of mid-career diplomats

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If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Country: Austria

1) How does the exchange of your diplomats among each other look like?

☒ Channels facilitated by the MFA are available ☐ Only by privately arranged ones

☐ There is an adequate amount of exchange ☐ A higher frequency of exchange is desired

☒ Other (please specify in further comments)

Comments: Privately arranged exchange in addition to channels facilitated by the MFA.

2) How does your training for mid-career diplomats look like?

☒ Voluntary ☒ Chosen by the MFA ☒ Compulsory

☐ Only provided by external providers ☐ Only in-house training is provided

☒ A combination of both

☐ Similar for everybody ☒ Distinguishes between bi- and multilateral Diplomats

☒ Only in person ☐ Only online learning ☐ Blended learning

☒ Considered for diplomat's postings ☐ Not considered for diplomat's postings

Comments:

3) Was the training situation actively changed or adapted to new developments within the last 20 years?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what changed?

☒ The content ☒ The used medium ☒ The obligations

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Did it adapt to the industry 4.0?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

4) Are any changes planned in the future?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what kind of changes?

☒ Content-related changes

☒ Medium-related changes

☒ Obligational changes

☐ Changes in strategy

☐ Changes in its goal

☐ Changes in its vision

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

If yes, what are the expected challenges?

☒ The limited available resources

☒ The undervalued status of diplomats' training

☐ Diplomats' own willingness to change

☐ Bureaucracies that hinder change

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

3

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

5) Further comments and remarks

4

(b) Belgium

Date received: 26.03.2020

Veronika Bramböck | veronika.bramboeck@da-vienna.at | +43 (0)650 6233 031 | Moosen 3, 6233 Kramsach, Austria

Questionnaire on the training of mid-career diplomats

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer this questionnaire for my master thesis at the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna.

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If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Country:

Belgium

1) How does the exchange of your diplomats among each other look like?

- ☒ Channels facilitated by the MFA are available ☐ Only by privately arranged ones
☐ There is an adequate amount of exchange ☒ A higher frequency of exchange is desired
☐ Other (please specify in further comments)

Comments:

The most important exchange is a yearly gathering at our ministry for the mid-career diplomats (1 per diplomatic posting).

1

2) How does your training for mid-career diplomats look like?

- ☒ Voluntary ☒ Chosen by the MFA ☐ Compulsory
☐ Only provided by external providers ☐ Only in-house training is provided
☒ A combination of both
☒ Similar for everybody ☐ Distinguishes between bi- and multilateral Diplomats
☐ Only in person ☐ Only online learning ☒ Blended learning
☒ Considered for diplomat's postings ☐ Not considered for diplomat's postings

Comments:

The discussion about the need for training for mid-career diplomats is ongoing, but there is a growing consensus for the need of it. The main issues are:
- How does a training has to look like?
- Does it have to be compulsory?
- To what extent can it have an influence on the career development?

3) Was the training situation actively changed or adapted to new developments within the last 20 years?

- ☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what changed?

- ☒ The content ☒ The used medium ☒ The obligations
☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

2

Did it adapt to the industry 4.0?

☐ Yes

☒ No

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☒ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☒ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

ICT-security is a real challenge and is holding back the use of up to date technology.

4) Are any changes planned in the future?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what kind of changes?

☒ Content-related changes

☒ Medium-related changes

☒ Obligational changes

☒ Changes in strategy

☐ Changes in its goal

☒ Changes in its vision

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

If yes, what are the expected challenges?

☐ The limited available resources

☒ The undervalued status of diplomats' training

☒ Diplomats' own willingness to change

☒ Bureaucracies that hinder change

☒ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

biggest challenge: Political and personal reluctance to see training and testing as a prerequisite for career development, specifically in the area of HR training.

5) Further comments and remarks

3

4

(c) Croatia

Date received: 21.02.2020

Veronika Bramböck | veronika.bramboeck@da-vienna.at | +43 (0)650 6233 031 | Moosen 3, 6233 Kramsach, Austria

Questionnaire on the training of mid-career diplomats

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If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Country:

Croatia

1) How does the exchange of your diplomats among each other look like?

- ☒ Channels facilitated by the MFA are available ☐ Only by privately arranged ones
☐ There is an adequate amount of exchange ☐ A higher frequency of exchange is desired
☐ Other (please specify in further comments)

Comments:

1

2) How does your training for mid-career diplomats look like?

- ☐ Voluntary ☒ Chosen by the MFA ☐ Compulsory
☐ Only provided by external providers ☐ Only in-house training is provided
☒ A combination of both
☒ Similar for everybody ☐ Distinguishes between bi- and multilateral Diplomats
☒ Only in person ☐ Only online learning ☐ Blended learning
☒ Considered for diplomat's postings ☐ Not considered for diplomat's postings

Comments:

3) Was the training situation actively changed or adapted to new developments within the last 20 years?

- ☒ Yes ☐ No
If yes, what changed?
☒ The content ☐ The used medium ☐ The obligations
☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

2

Did it adapt to the industry 4.0?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

4) Are any changes planned in the future?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what kind of changes?

☐ Content-related changes

☐ Medium-related changes

☐ Obligational changes

☒ Changes in strategy

☐ Changes in its goal

☐ Changes in its vision

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

If yes, what are the expected challenges?

☐ The limited available resources

☒ The undervalued status of diplomats' training

☒ Diplomats' own willingness to change

☐ Bureaucracies that hinder change

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

3

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

5) Further comments and remarks

4

(d) Czech Republic

Date received: 11.03.2020

2) How does your training for mid-career diplomats look like?

☐ Voluntary	☒ Chosen by the MFA	☐ Compulsory
☐ Only provided by external providers	☐ Only in-house training is provided	
☒ A combination of both		
☒ Similar for everybody	☐ Distinguishes between bi- and multilateral Diplomats	
☐ Only in person	☐ Only online learning	☒ Blended learning
☒ Considered for diplomat's postings	☒ Not considered for diplomat's postings	

Comments:

Training must be distinguished : regular and pre-posting.

3) Was the training situation actively changed or adapted to new developments within the last 20 years?

☒ Yes	☐ No
If yes, what changed?	
☒ The content	☒ The used medium
☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)	☐ The obligations

Veronika Bramböck | veronika.bramboeck@da-vienna.at | +43 (0)650 6233 031 | Moosen 3, 6233 Kramsach, Austria

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If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Country:

Czech Republic

1) How does the exchange of your diplomats among each other look like?

☐ Channels facilitated by the MFA are available	☐ Only by privately arranged ones
☒ There is an adequate amount of exchange	☐ A higher frequency of exchange is desired
☐ Other (please specify in further comments)	

Comments:

The question is unclear: what sort of exchange is meant by this? Posting abroad? Exchange of information?

In principle, diplomats stay 2 years at headquarters and 4 year abroad. But there are many other options as well, both at home and abroad.

Did it adapt to the industry 4.0?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

4) Are any changes planned in the future?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what kind of changes?

☒ Content-related changes

☐ Medium-related changes

☐ Obligational changes

☐ Changes in strategy

☒ Changes in its goal

☒ Changes in its vision

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

If yes, what are the expected challenges?

☐ The limited available resources

☐ The undervalued status of diplomats' training

☒ Diplomats' own willingness to change

☐ Bureaucracies that hinder change

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

3

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

5) Further comments and remarks

Mid-career training in general is considered to be not an easy one. Motivation and goal as well as duty specified by law is very important. In the Czech Republic, both laws on civil service as well as law on foreign service specific training as a duty as well as right of the employee. To fulfill training plan of each employee prepared on a yearly term is part of a personal assessment of each diplomat.

4

(e) Estonia

Date received: 18.02.2020

Veronika Bramböck | veronika.bramboeck@da-vienna.at | +43 (0)650 6233 031 | Moosen 3, 6233 Kramsach, Austria

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If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Country:

Estonia

1) How does the exchange of your diplomats among each other look like?

- ☒ Channels facilitated by the MFA are available ☐ Only by privately arranged ones
☒ There is an adequate amount of exchange ☐ A higher frequency of exchange is desired
☐ Other (please specify in further comments)

Comments:

I do not quite understand the question. We have obligation to change posts.

1

2) How does your training for mid-career diplomats look like?

- ☐ Voluntary ☐ Chosen by the MFA ☐ Compulsory
☐ Only provided by external providers ☐ Only in-house training is provided
☒ A combination of both
☒ Similar for everybody ☐ Distinguishes between bi- and multilateral Diplomats
☐ Only in person ☐ Only online learning ☒ Blended learning
☐ Considered for diplomat's postings ☒ Not considered for diplomat's postings

Comments:

Both training options are possible - voluntary and chosen by the MFA. Some modules/trainings are compulsory - for example 75% of the new diplomats programme; 75% of the preposting training before the first foreign posting and financial modul of preposting training programme for managers.

3) Was the training situation actively changed or adapted to new developments within the last 20 years?

- ☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what changed?

- ☒ The content ☐ The used medium ☒ The obligations
☒ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

2

Did it adapt to the industry 4.0?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

We overlook our training needs and programmes every year and adjust yearly training plan accordingly (includes trainings as well as our own programmes tightly related to the identified needs) . New themes and practice in departments has been included. There is no identical programme , each year is different.

4) Are any changes planned in the future?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what kind of changes?

☒ Content-related changes

☐ Medium-related changes

☐ Obligational changes

☐ Changes in strategy

☐ Changes in its goal

☐ Changes in its vision

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

If yes, what are the expected challenges?

☒ The limited available resources

☐ The undervalued status of diplomats' training

☐ Diplomats' own willingness to change

☐ Bureaucracies that hinder change

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

3

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

We have a clear vision what we want to achieve. There are clearly identified goals in front of Estonian foreign service set down in our Foreign Policy Development Plan 2030 on the basis of what we have defined MFA's 5-year personnel development plan which in its turn is composed of concrete yearly development plans together with finances. When considering our training needs we look at organisational (SWOT analysis) as well as individual needs (feedback and evaluation report) and plan our finances and activities accordingly. The biggest challenge is management training esp. their willingness to develop as managers.

5) Further comments and remarks

4

(f) Finland

Date received: 25.02.2020

Veronika Bramböck | veronika.bramboeck@di-vienna.at | +43 (0)650 6233 031 | Moosen 3, 6233 Kramsach, Austria

Questionnaire on the training of mid-career diplomats

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If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Country:

Finland

1) How does the exchange of your diplomats among each other look like?

- ☒ Channels facilitated by the MFA are available ☐ Only by privately arranged ones
☒ There is an adequate amount of exchange ☐ A higher frequency of exchange is desired
☒ Other (please specify in further comments)

Comments:

I'm not sure if I understand the question correctly, but if we are talking about whether diplomats stay in touch and interact with each other, the MFA organizes a number of trainings which also provide an opportunity to meet colleagues, catch up and exchange views. Naturally many people are also in contact with each other in a private capacity. The MFA also participates in a selected number of exchange practices with other EU countries, which provide diplomats a possibility to network with colleagues from other foreign services.

1

2) How does your training for mid-career diplomats look like?

- ☒ Voluntary ☒ Chosen by the MFA ☐ Compulsory
☐ Only provided by external providers ☐ Only in-house training is provided
☒ A combination of both
☒ Similar for everybody ☒ Distinguishes between bi- and multilateral Diplomats
☐ Only in person ☐ Only online learning ☒ Blended learning
☐ Considered for diplomat's postings ☐ Not considered for diplomat's postings

Comments:

The MFA organizes many types of regular training that benefit also mid-career diplomats. Some of these are in preparation of postings abroad, some are not (in reply to the last set of options above). We are currently trying out a pilot training especially designed for mid-career colleagues (10-15 years of experience), both diplomatic and consular/administrative staff.

3) Was the training situation actively changed or adapted to new developments within the last 20 years?

- ☒ Yes ☐ No
If yes, what changed?
☒ The content ☒ The used medium ☐ The obligations
☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

2

Did it adapt to the industry 4.0?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

We have constantly developed the content of trainings offered, taking into account the changing needs and policy environment. Generally speaking, the training is much more interactive and geared towards providing practical skills and tools for work than what it used to be. Naturally, the need to change and adopt the training will be a continuous challenge also in the future.

4) Are any changes planned in the future?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what kind of changes?

☒ Content-related changes

☒ Medium-related changes

☐ Obligational changes

☒ Changes in strategy

☒ Changes in its goal

☐ Changes in its vision

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

If yes, what are the expected challenges?

☒ The limited available resources

☐ The undervalued status of diplomats' training

☐ Diplomats' own willingness to change

☐ Bureaucracies that hinder change

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

3

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

The training supply is constantly being reviewed and fine-tuned against the identified needs and demand and the feed-back received from present courses.

5) Further comments and remarks

4

Veronika Bramböck | veronika.bramboeck@di-vienna.at | +43 (0)650 6233 031 | Moosen 3, 6233 Kramsach, Austria

Questionnaire on the training of mid-career diplomats

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Furthermore, I will investigate whether there is a visible trend within the MFAs regarding the transformation of their training and if those observations are comparable to the changes in the private sector, where more and more firms and organizations focus on the learning needs of their staff and try to help implement a lifelong learning culture.

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If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Country:

FRANCE

1) How does the exchange of your diplomats among each other look like?

☒ Channels facilitated by the MFA are available ☐ Only by privately arranged ones

☒ There is an adequate amount of exchange ☐ A higher frequency of exchange is desired

☐ Other (please specify in further comments)

Comments:

Le métier de diplomate se fonde par essence sur la notion d'échanges et de réseaux. La formation professionnelle permet de favoriser l'appropriation des techniques de communication et de maintenir un bon niveau d'appropriation des canaux de l'information. Le ministère met à disposition les outils de communication interne qui facilitent l'échange entre les personnels. Des initiatives régulières permettent de créer de nouveaux cadres de convivialité et d'échanges entre diplomates, en dehors du strict cadre de leurs missions professionnelles. La constitution d'associations à l'initiative des agents a permis ces dernières années de porter de façon constructive des réflexions nouvelles sur l'articulation entre la vie privée et la vie professionnelle autour de préoccupations communes (association des jeunes diplomates, Femmes et diplomatie...). Par ailleurs, la direction des ressources humaines organise régulièrement des conférences animées par des diplomates qui interviennent sur des thèmes variés et d'actualité, à destination de tous leurs collègues intéressés.

2) How does your training for mid-career diplomats look like?

☐ Voluntary ☒ Chosen by the MFA ☐ Compulsory

☐ Only provided by external providers ☐ Only in-house training is provided

☒ A combination of both

☒ Similar for everybody ☐ Distinguishes between bi- and multilateral Diplomats

☐ Only in person ☐ Only online learning ☒ Blended learning

☒ Considered for diplomat's postings ☐ Not considered for diplomat's postings

Comments:

Au sein de l'Institut diplomatique et consulaire (IDC), le cycle de formation à mi-carrière a été conçu il y a dix ans avec pour objectif de former les nouveaux cadres intermédiaires du ministère exerçant la première fois les fonctions de directeur adjoint, de sous-directeur ou de chef de service.

D'une durée de 3 ans, ce cycle de formation vise en priorité à renforcer les compétences managériales des diplomates y compris dans les situations de crise, à approfondir leurs connaissances sur des enjeux prioritaires de notre action internationale et à maintenir les compétences métier à un niveau d'excellence.

Organisée sous la forme de modules de 1 à 2 journées à raison d'une douzaine de jours de formation chaque année, l'IDC mi-carrière combine à la fois des modules de formation collectifs et un suivi personnalisé des agents notamment en matière de formation linguistique.

3) Was the training situation actively changed or adapted to new developments within the last 20 years?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what changed?

☐ The content ☒ The used medium ☐ The obligations

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Did it adapt to the industry 4.0?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

Dans un contexte de changement permanent et rapide des conditions d'exercice des métiers du ministère des Affaires étrangères, la formation des diplomates vise à concilier le développement des compétences des personnels avec la professionnalisation des services.

Parmi les priorités de la formation professionnelle, une attention spécifique a été portée lors des récentes années au renforcement des compétences managériales, à l'apprentissage des langues, à la gestion de crise et à la connaissance des questions de sécurité, à la communication (media-training et prise de parole en public).

Le développement du e-learning tient dans ce contexte une place importante et se situe au cœur de notre stratégie de formation.

4) Are any changes planned in the future?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what kind of changes?

☒ Content-related changes

☒ Medium-related changes

☐ Obligational changes

☒ Changes in strategy

☒ Changes in its goal

☒ Changes in its vision

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

If yes, what are the expected challenges?

☐ The limited available resources

☐ The undervalued status of diplomats' training

☐ Diplomats' own willingness to change

☐ Bureaucracies that hinder change

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

Plusieurs pistes sont actuellement à l'étude :

- examiner de nouveaux partenariats avec d'autres instituts de formation dans un souci de complémentarité et renforcer les coopérations existantes avec nos partenaires étrangers ;
- standardiser les supports pédagogiques pour les différents modules et les procédures d'évaluation ;
- développer une base documentaire pour compléter en e-learning les formations en présentiel.

5) Further comments and remarks

Dans le souci de répondre à votre sujet d'études, nous avons traité ici de la formation des diplomates et plus particulièrement de la formation des diplomates à mi-carrière.

Cela étant, il est juste de préciser que notre politique de formation a pour objectif de concilier le développement des compétences de l'ensemble des agents, toutes catégories confondues. A titre d'exemple, la DRH est très attentive à la formation des personnels de recrutement local.

Le contenu de notre offre est déterminé en fonction des besoins courants des services et des agents (à travers une enquête annuelle), des changements prévisibles touchant aux métiers (réformes de structure, modernisation des outils informatiques) et des priorités ministérielles ou interministérielles de la formation professionnelle (gestion des ressources humaines, adaptation au changement, développement durable, questions européennes, etc.)

Nous espérons que cette contribution répondra à vos attentes et vous souhaitons tout le succès dans la réalisation de votre étude.

2) How does your training for mid-career diplomats look like?

☐ Voluntary

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☐ Compulsory

☐ Only provided by external providers

☐ Only in-house training is provided

☒ A combination of both

☒ Similar for everybody

☐ Distinguishes between bi- and multilateral Diplomats

☐ Only in person

☐ Only online learning

☒ Blended learning

☐ Considered for diplomat's postings

☒ Not considered for diplomat's postings

Comments:

In some cases, diplomats will identify training from external providers and bring it to the Training & Development unit for sanction. We will consider these on a case-by-case basis.

3) Was the training situation actively changed or adapted to new developments within the last 20 years?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what changed?

☒ The content

☒ The used medium

☐ The obligations

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

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Country: Ireland

1) How does the exchange of your diplomats among each other look like?

☐ Channels facilitated by the MFA are available

☐ Only by privately arranged ones

☒ There is an adequate amount of exchange

☐ A higher frequency of exchange is desired

☐ Other (please specify in further comments)

Comments:

Did it adapt to the industry 4.0?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

4) Are any changes planned in the future?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what kind of changes?

☒ Content-related changes

☒ Medium-related changes

☐ Obligational changes

☒ Changes in strategy

☐ Changes in its goal

☐ Changes in its vision

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

If yes, what are the expected challenges?

☒ The limited available resources

☐ The undervalued status of diplomats' training

☐ Diplomats' own willingness to change

☐ Bureaucracies that hinder change

☒ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

3

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

We are approaching a period where we will have many diplomats retiring over the next 10 years, this will lead to a loss of institutional memory and will require significant investment in training of new diplomats. Similarly, difficulties arising from the British exit from the EU will stretch our resources.

5) Further comments and remarks

4

(i) Italy

Date received: 21.05.2020

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Country:

Italy

1) How does the exchange of your diplomats among each other look like?

☐ Channels facilitated by the MFA are available ☐ Only by privately arranged ones
☒ There is an adequate amount of exchange ☐ A higher frequency of exchange is desired
☐ Other (please specify in further comments)

Comments:

Mid-career diplomats training, based in Rome, traditionally provides an important networking venue for mid-career diplomats after approx. 8 years abroad.

1

2) How does your training for mid-career diplomats look like?

☐ Voluntary ☐ Chosen by the MFA ☒ Compulsory
☐ Only provided by external providers ☐ Only in-house training is provided
☒ A combination of both
☒ Similar for everybody ☐ Distinguishes between bi- and multilateral Diplomats
☒ Only in person ☐ Only online learning ☐ Blended learning
☐ Considered for diplomat's postings ☒ Not considered for diplomat's postings

Comments:

Since 2014, mid-career diplomats training is provided partly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself, partly by Italy's National School of Administration (SNA).

In light of the COVID-19 pandemics, it is likely that in the future a blended learning approach will be developed.

3) Was the training situation actively changed or adapted to new developments within the last 20 years?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what changed?

☒ The content ☒ The used medium ☐ The obligations
☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

2

Did it adapt to the industry 4.0?

☐ Yes

☒ No

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☒ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

While a systematic effort to adapt to industry 4.0 has not yet been undertaken, there is a growing awareness of the need for lifelong training for diplomats.

In the last few years, traditional training has been integrated by an increasing focus on digital diplomacy and the use of social media. The use of e-learning has also significantly increased.

4) Are any changes planned in the future?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what kind of changes?

☒ Content-related changes

☐ Medium-related changes

☐ Obligational changes

☐ Changes in strategy

☐ Changes in its goal

☐ Changes in its vision

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

If yes, what are the expected challenges?

☐ The limited available resources

☐ The undervalued status of diplomats' training

☐ Diplomats' own willingness to change

☐ Bureaucracies that hinder change

☒ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

We are planning to integrate the training provided by the SNA and the Ministry itself with training provided by academic institutions. A stronger focus on EU issues is also being considered.

Finally, Italy's MOFA is planning to invest more in language training (also in e-learning) in "difficult" languages such as Arabic, Chinese and Russian for all staff to be posted abroad.

5) Further comments and remarks

3

4

(j) Luxembourg

Date received: 23.03.2020

Veronika Bramböck | veronika.bramboeck@da-vienna.at | +43 (0)650 6233 031 | Moosens 3, 6233 Kramsach, Austria

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Country:

Luxembourg

1) How does the exchange of your diplomats among each other look like?

- ☒ Channels facilitated by the MFA are available ☐ Only by privately arranged ones
☐ There is an adequate amount of exchange ☐ A higher frequency of exchange is desired
☐ Other (please specify in further comments)

Comments:

1

2) How does your training for mid-career diplomats look like?

- ☐ Voluntary ☒ Chosen by the MFA ☒ Compulsory
☐ Only provided by external providers ☐ Only in-house training is provided
☒ A combination of both
☐ Similar for everybody ☐ Distinguishes between bi- and multilateral Diplomats
☐ Only in person ☐ Only online learning ☒ Blended learning
☒ Considered for diplomat's postings ☐ Not considered for diplomat's postings

Comments:

3) Was the training situation actively changed or adapted to new developments within the last 20 years?

- ☒ Yes ☐ No
If yes, what changed?
☒ The content ☒ The used medium ☒ The obligations
☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

2

Did it adapt to the industry 4.0?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

4) Are any changes planned in the future?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what kind of changes?

☐ Content-related changes

☐ Medium-related changes

☐ Obligational changes

☐ Changes in strategy

☐ Changes in its goal

☒ Changes in its vision

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

If yes, what are the expected challenges?

☒ The limited available resources

☐ The undervalued status of diplomats' training

☐ Diplomats' own willingness to change

☐ Bureaucracies that hinder change

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

5) Further comments and remarks

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Country:

Portugal

1) How does the exchange of your diplomats among each other look like?

- ☐ Channels facilitated by the MFA are available ☐ Only by privately arranged ones
- ☒ There is an adequate amount of exchange ☐ A higher frequency of exchange is desired
- ☐ Other (please specify in further comments)

Comments:

2) How does your training for mid-career diplomats look like?

- ☒ Voluntary ☒ Chosen by the MFA ☐ Compulsory
- ☐ Only provided by external providers ☐ Only in-house training is provided
- ☒ A combination of both
- ☒ Similar for everybody ☐ Distinguishes between bi- and multilateral Diplomats
- ☐ Only in person ☐ Only online learning ☒ Blended learning
- ☒ Considered for diplomat's postings ☐ Not considered for diplomat's postings

Comments:

3) Was the training situation actively changed or adapted to new developments within the last 20 years?

- ☒ Yes ☐ No
- If yes, what changed?
- ☒ The content ☒ The used medium ☒ The obligations
- ☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Did it adapt to the industry 4.0?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

NA

4) Are any changes planned in the future?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what kind of changes?

☒ Content-related changes

☐ Medium-related changes

☐ Obligational changes

☒ Changes in strategy

☒ Changes in its goal

☐ Changes in its vision

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

If yes, what are the expected challenges?

☐ The limited available resources

☐ The undervalued status of diplomats' training

☒ Diplomats' own willingness to change

☐ Bureaucracies that hinder change

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

3

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

NA

5) Further comments and remarks

4

(I) Romania

Date received: 27.02.2020

Veronika Brandtsch | veronika.brandtsch@ifo-wien.at | +43 (0)650 623 031 | Messen 3, 623 Kremsmühl, Austria

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If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Country:

Romania

1) How does the exchange of your diplomats among each other look like?

- ☒ Channels facilitated by the MFA are available ☐ Only by privately arranged ones
☒ There is an adequate amount of exchange ☐ A higher frequency of exchange is desired
☐ Other (please specify in further comments)

Comments:

1

2) How does your training for mid-career diplomats look like?

- ☒ Voluntary ☒ Chosen by the MFA ☐ Compulsory
☐ Only provided by external providers ☐ Only in-house training is provided
☒ A combination of both
☒ Similar for everybody ☐ Distinguishes between bi- and multilateral Diplomats
☐ Only in person ☐ Only online learning ☒ Blended learning
☒ Considered for diplomat's postings ☐ Not considered for diplomat's postings

Comments:

Also considered for promotion

3) Was the training situation actively changed or adapted to new developments within the last 20 years?

- ☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what changed?

- ☒ The content ☒ The used medium ☒ The obligations
☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

2

Did it adapt to the industry 4.0?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

4) Are any changes planned in the future?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what kind of changes?

☒ Content-related changes

☐ Medium-related changes

☐ Obligational changes

☒ Changes in strategy

☐ Changes in its goal

☐ Changes in its vision

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

If yes, what are the expected challenges?

☒ The limited available resources

☒ The undervalued status of diplomats' training

☐ Diplomats' own willingness to change

☒ Bureaucracies that hinder change

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

4

2) How does your training for mid-career diplomats look like?

☐ Voluntary	☒ Chosen by the MFA	☒ Compulsory
☐ Only provided by external providers	☐ Only in-house training is provided	
☒ A combination of both		
☒ Similar for everybody	☐ Distinguishes between bi- and multilateral Diplomats	
☒ Only in person	☒ Only online learning	☐ Blended learning
☒ Considered for diplomat's postings		
☐ Not considered for diplomat's postings		

Comments:

In January, at the beginning of each year, MFA diplomats have to choose from the range of areas in which they will improve during the year. The areas of improvement are related to their profession, of course. For example: further training in the field of speaking in front of the cameras, or how to improve your negotiation or mediation skills etc.

3) Was the training situation actively changed or adapted to new developments within the last 20 years?

☒ Yes	☐ No
If yes, what changed?	
☒ The content	☐ The used medium
☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)	
☐ The obligations	

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If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Country:

Slovakia

1) How does the exchange of your diplomats among each other look like?

☒ Channels facilitated by the MFA are available	☐ Only by privately arranged ones
☒ There is an adequate amount of exchange	☐ A higher frequency of exchange is desired
☐ Other (please specify in further comments)	

Comments:

When it comes the postings abroad: our diplomats are usually posted for 3+1 year. Once their mission is finished, they return to the MFA.

Did it adapt to the industry 4.0?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☒ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

Digitization has also had an impact on the internal processes within the MFA. For example, the exchange of documents between the various departments is done by software means. We print very few documents. Thus, the evaluation of the needs for further training of the employees is done by the diversives applications etc.

4) Are any changes planned in the future?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what kind of changes?

☒ Content-related changes

☒ Medium-related changes

☐ Obligational changes

☐ Changes in strategy

☐ Changes in its goal

☒ Changes in its vision

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

If yes, what are the expected challenges?

☒ The limited available resources

☐ The undervalued status of diplomats' training

☒ Diplomats' own willingness to change

☐ Bureaucracies that hinder change

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

3

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

In fact, our institution is very open to the changes that are necessary with regard the training of diplomats. We adapt the training modules to the 'the challenges of the times'. Especially when it comes the development of diplomat's personal skills - in the field on how to deal with ... hybrid warfare. Fake news. Training are also focused on language skills development of diplomats; EU institutions and the functioning of the EU; Diplomatic Protocol; Crisis management; Manager's training; meeting's, stress and conflict management; presentation's skills; team work; working under stress and time management etc.

5) Further comments and remarks

4

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Questionnaire on the training of mid-career diplomats

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer this questionnaire for my master thesis at the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna.

With my thesis, I aim to examine the learning environment mid-career diplomats are facing nowadays. This means that I will be looking at the training arrangements career diplomats encounter after their initial training phases.

Furthermore, I will investigate whether there is a visible trend within the MFAs regarding the transformation of their training and if those observations are comparable to the changes in the private sector, where more and more firms and organizations focus on the learning needs of their staff and try to help implement a lifelong learning culture.

Kindly note that by answering these questions, you consent to your answers being shown in the annex of my thesis.

The questions are followed by possible response options, where you can simply tick the fitting answers. However, if there is no suitable answer available, or if you wish to clarify or extend your answer, please do not hesitate to use the comments boxes beneath the respective questions.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Country:

Slovenia

1) How does the exchange of your diplomats among each other look like?

- ☒ Channels facilitated by the MFA are available ☐ Only by privately arranged ones
☐ There is an adequate amount of exchange ☒ A higher frequency of exchange is desired
☐ Other (please specify in further comments)

Comments:

Currently, we do have some channels of information and experience sharing that occur mainly during the work meetings (e.g. debriefings of Ambassadors following their return from the post abroad, annual diplomatic consultations; annual consular consultations). In addition, some exchange takes place during the yearly training programmes for diplomatic exams. However, a more systematic practice is needed. For this reason we are in the process of establishing the Diplomatic academy at the MFA. An important part of the academy will be a continuous learning programme. It will host lectures and presentations by fellow diplomats and external speakers on topical issues relevant to Slovenian diplomacy.

1

2) How does your training for mid-career diplomats look like?

- ☐ Voluntary ☐ Chosen by the MFA ☒ Compulsory
☐ Only provided by external providers ☐ Only in-house training is provided
☒ A combination of both
☒ Similar for everybody ☐ Distinguishes between bi- and multilateral Diplomats
☒ Only in person ☐ Only online learning ☐ Blended learning
☐ Considered for diplomat's postings ☒ Not considered for diplomat's postings

Comments:

The main training for mid-career diplomats (i.e. after 10 years of experience) is the programme for the higher diplomatic exam that they have to succeed. (The programme takes place during one week, to be extended to two weeks.) This training is compulsory if the diplomat wishes to acquire a higher position in the diplomatic corps (so-called "first rank"). The programme is a combination of both, internal and external providers; however we observe that external providers often do not have awareness of the working processes in diplomacy. Our trainees provide a feedback that courses were reminiscent of their university studies. A more balanced combination between theory and practice is needed.
The programme is the same for everybody and currently takes the shape of lectures in person. In the future, we will supplement in person education with audio and video materials as an auxiliary learning tool.
For diplomat's postings we have a special programme that is run by the personnel service (i.e. "preparations for the post abroad"). During this programme diplomats visit all departments at the MFA to gain information relevant for their posts abroad.

3) Was the training situation actively changed or adapted to new developments within the last 20 years?

- ☒ Yes ☐ No
If yes, what changed?
☐ The content ☐ The used medium ☒ The obligations
☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

2

Did it adapt to the industry 4.0?

☐ Yes

☒ No

If no, why not?

☒ Not enough resources

☒ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

The major change occurred in 2009 with the new Foreign Affairs Act stipulating the obligation for all diplomats to pass the diplomatic exam (after 2 years of service) and the higher diplomatic exam (after 10 years of service).
As mentioned before, the training programme is implemented in the form of in person lectures or presentations. It seems that the coronariss, on the other hand, dissipated arguments that the on-line training is not desirable (due to security, technical or bureaucratic reasons). Audiovisual communication is increasingly being considered as part of the daily routine.
Programmes of the Diplomatic academy will be enriched with audio and video contents. Nonetheless, the preferable mode of training will remain to be person-to-person, as this is still the most genuine mode for the transfer of knowledge and communication (in particular the availability of an immediate feedback).

4) Are any changes planned in the future?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what kind of changes?

☒ Content-related changes

☒ Medium-related changes

☐ Obligational changes

☒ Changes in strategy

☐ Changes in its goal

☐ Changes in its vision

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

If yes, what are the expected challenges?

☒ The limited available resources

☐ The undervalued status of diplomats' training

☐ Diplomats' own willingness to change

☒ Bureaucracies that hinder change

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

3

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

By autumn 2020 we are planning to put into operation the Diplomatic academy (already formally established) that will be based on contemporary approaches to diplomatic education: a) the use of applied sciences; b) accent on practice; c) interactivity with the participants; d) the use of modern technologies; e) the use of modern pedagogical methods; f) the excellence of providers' knowledge, expertise and experience.
It will consist of four pillars:
- 1st pillar: annual training programmes for diplomatic exams (already in place). They are going to be expanded from one to two weeks and enriched with more practical topics, audio and video contents, and the use of modern technologies (e.g. digital diplomacy working environment, diplomatic tools etc.) that will follow the concept of continuous learning;
- 2nd pillar: weekly modules on diplomatic skills (e.g. global challenges, bilateral issues, international rule of law, economic diplomacy etc.) based on the concept of continuous learning;
- 3rd pillar: ad-hoc training seminars focused on a particular topic (e.g. EU affairs, digital diplomacy) to take place from 1 to 3 days.
All pillars are going to include some parts of audio or video learning material. The latter will be useful for our diplomats abroad giving them an opportunity to access learning contents via the Internet.

5) Further comments and remarks

/

4

Questionnaire on the training of mid-career diplomats

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With my thesis, I aim to examine the learning environment mid-career diplomats are facing nowadays. This means that I will be looking at the training arrangements career diplomats encounter after their initial training phases.

Furthermore, I will investigate whether there is a visible trend within the MFAs regarding the transformation of their training and if those observations are comparable to the changes in the private sector, where more and more firms and organizations focus on the learning needs of their staff and try to help implement a lifelong learning culture.

Kindly note that by answering these questions, you consent to your answers being shown in the annex of my thesis.

The questions are followed by possible response options, where you can simply tick the fitting answers. However, if there is no suitable answer available, or if you wish to clarify or extend your answer, please do not hesitate to use the comments boxes beneath the respective questions.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Country:

Sweden

1) How does the exchange of your diplomats among each other look like?

- ☒ Channels facilitated by the MFA are available ☐ Only by privately arranged ones
☐ There is an adequate amount of exchange ☐ A higher frequency of exchange is desired
☐ Other (please specify in further comments)

Comments:

1

2) How does your training for mid-career diplomats look like?

- ☐ Voluntary ☒ Chosen by the MFA ☐ Compulsory
☐ Only provided by external providers ☐ Only in-house training is provided
☒ A combination of both
☒ Similar for everybody ☐ Distinguishes between bi- and multilateral Diplomats
☐ Only in person ☐ Only online learning ☒ Blended learning
☒ Considered for diplomat's postings ☒ Not considered for diplomat's postings

Comments:

3) Was the training situation actively changed or adapted to new developments within the last 20 years?

- ☒ Yes ☐ No
If yes, what changed?
☒ The content ☒ The used medium ☐ The obligations
☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

2

Did it adapt to the industry 4.0?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

4) Are any changes planned in the future?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what kind of changes?

☒ Content-related changes

☒ Medium-related changes

☐ Obligational changes

☐ Changes in strategy

☐ Changes in its goal

☐ Changes in its vision

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

If yes, what are the expected challenges?

☒ The limited available resources

☐ The undervalued status of diplomats' training

☐ Diplomats' own willingness to change

☒ Bureaucracies that hinder change

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

3

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

5) Further comments and remarks

4

Questionnaire on the training of mid-career diplomats

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With my thesis, I aim to examine the learning environment mid-career diplomats are facing nowadays. This means that I will be looking at the training arrangements career diplomats encounter after their initial training phases.

Furthermore, I will investigate whether there is a visible trend within the MFAs regarding the transformation of their training and if those observations are comparable to the changes in the private sector, where more and more firms and organizations focus on the learning needs of their staff and try to help implement a lifelong learning culture.

Kindly note that by answering these questions, you consent to your answers being shown in the annex of my thesis.

The questions are followed by possible response options, where you can simply tick the fitting answers. However, if there is no suitable answer available, or if you wish to clarify or extend your answer, please do not hesitate to use the comments boxes beneath the respective questions.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Country:

Switzerland

1) How does the exchange of your diplomats among each other look like?

- ☐ Channels facilitated by the MFA are available ☐ Only by privately arranged ones
- ☒ There is an adequate amount of exchange ☐ A higher frequency of exchange is desired
- ☐ Other (please specify in further comments)

Comments:

1

2) How does your training for mid-career diplomats look like?

- ☐ Voluntary ☒ Chosen by the MFA ☐ Compulsory
- ☐ Only provided by external providers ☐ Only in-house training is provided
- ☒ A combination of both
- ☒ Similar for everybody ☐ Distinguishes between bi- and multilateral Diplomats
- ☐ Only in person ☐ Only online learning ☐ Blended learning
- ☒ Considered for diplomat's postings ☒ Not considered for diplomat's postings

Comments:

mix of "only in person" and online learning

3) Was the training situation actively changed or adapted to new developments within the last 20 years?

- ☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what changed?

- ☒ The content ☒ The used medium ☒ The obligations
- ☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

2

Did it adapt to the industry 4.0?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

4) Are any changes planned in the future?

☒ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what kind of changes?

☒ Content-related changes

☒ Medium-related changes

☒ Obligational changes

☐ Changes in strategy

☐ Changes in its goal

☒ Changes in its vision

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

If yes, what are the expected challenges?

☒ The limited available resources

☐ The undervalued status of diplomats' training

☐ Diplomats' own willingness to change

☐ Bureaucracies that hinder change

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

3

If no, why not?

☐ Not enough resources

☐ Bureaucratic reasons

☐ Not discussed/needed

☐ Other (please specify in the comments box beneath)

Comments:

5) Further comments and remarks

4

D. Completed Follow-up Questionnaire for the Austrian MFA

Date received: 27.04.2020

Veronika Bramböck | veronika.bramboeck@da-vienna.at | +43 (0)650 6233 031 | Moosen 3, 6233 Kramsach, Austria

Open Questionnaire on the training of mid-career diplomats

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer some further questions about the training situation of the MFA.

The second part of my thesis will perform a small-n comparison that tries to identify and explain the reasons for the developments in the learning environment of mid-career diplomats.

This questionnaire solely uses open questions, in order to get a better insight and understanding of the personnel development in the MFA. Therefore, feel free to use as much space as needed for each question.

If something should be unclear or if you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Name: **Katrin Winkler, MSc**

Country: **Austria**

Follow-up questions to the previous answers:

- 1) In the previous questionnaire, it is mentioned that in terms of communication between the Austrian diplomats, there were channels facilitated by the MFA as well as privately arranged channels available.
 - a. Can you imagine when diplomats use which channel?
 - *Diplomats would use channels facilitated by the MFA mostly for the exchange of work-related information and privately arranged channels for more informal, social occasions.*
 - b. Is it possible to have an "open thread"¹ in the channel provided by the MFA?
 - *Yes, although these platforms are used for work-related communication rather than for seeking advice or exchanging experiences.*
 - c. Why do you reckon that diplomats start to arrange private channels? (Social reasons vs open needs that are not covered by the provided channel)
 - *For social reasons.*
- 2) In Austria, you distinguish between bi- and multilateral diplomatic training. Does this mean diplomats have to choose or become allocated to one of the career paths at the beginning? Are they able to change later on? If yes, what does that depend on?
 - *Austrian diplomats do not have to choose between bi- and multilateral careers. They receive the specific diplomatic training before they accede to their respective posts.*
- 3) According to the questionnaire, you only offer training in person. Are you planning on providing online courses, such as MOOCs², on your internal server?
 - *Yes, the Austrian Foreign Ministry is in the process of developing MOOCs for internal trainings, which should be available within the year.*

¹ With open thread, I refer to platform entries where every member is able to read and participate in the conversation. They are often used to ask a question, seek advice, and/or enquires about best practices.

² MOOC is the abbreviation of Massive Open Online Course

- 4) You indicated that Austria plans on introducing changes to the training of mid-career diplomats.
- a. What are you planning to change regarding the content?
 - *We are planning to adapt the content to reflect new social/political/technical developments by focusing on subjects, such as AI, Science Diplomacy, and Cyber Security*
 - b. What are you planning to change regarding the medium?
 - *We are planning to broaden our training possibilities to include more digital options, e.g. E-Learning (MOOC).*
 - c. What are you planning to change regarding the obligations?
 - *We aspire to add to the range of the, as of now few, obligatory trainings, to ensure an optimal preparation for our diplomats for their posts abroad.*
- 5) As the main challenges, you identified the limited resources and the underestimation of diplomatic training.
- a. Is the lack of resources due to a general scarceness, or is it related to its reputation?
 - *The lack of resources is mostly due to general scarceness of time available to complete trainings.*
 - b. Are you experiencing a change in reputation, or how are you trying to tackle this problem?
 - *We are already experiencing a change in reputation which manifests itself in the higher value attributed to training nowadays compared to the past. This has led and hopefully will further lead to more trainings being available, as well as higher demand for self-motivated learning among diplomats.*

More general questions:

- 6) How does the posting of diplomats look like for Austrian diplomats?
- *Austrian diplomats are posted to a country for a duration of four years in general, in the duration of which they are fulfilling their political and representative tasks according to their function and report important information back to Vienna.*
- 7) How old is the average Austrian diplomat? And what age are new applicants usually?
- *The average Austrian ambassador is around 55 years of age . New applicants usually range from early 20s to mid-30s.*
- 8) Does the motivation and commitment of diplomats, in terms of learning and working itself, change over the years?
- *One can assume that it does in most cases according to life experience gathered over the years. How this change may look, will likely differ from individual to individual.*

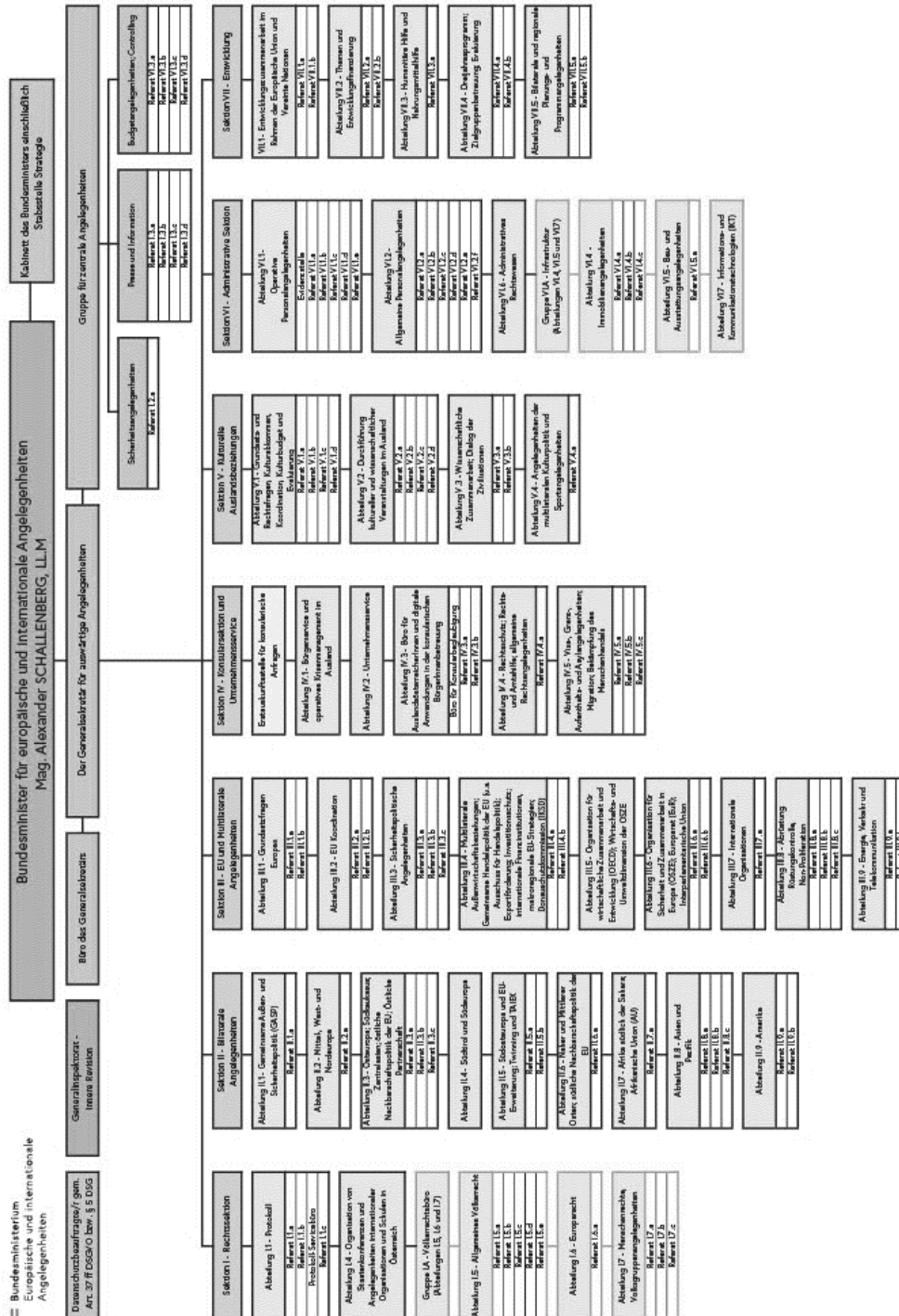
9) Does the Austrian MFA enable its diplomats to become so-called *lifelong learners*? Is the concept known and discussed in the MFA? If yes, how?

- *Yes, the MFA provides, enables and advertises a range of different courses, which are partly organised or provided by other federal institutions. An example for this is the VAB (Verwaltungsakademie des Bundes), where staff of the MFA may enrol for various sorts of trainings, from language classes to leadership workshops.*

Thanks again for your help!

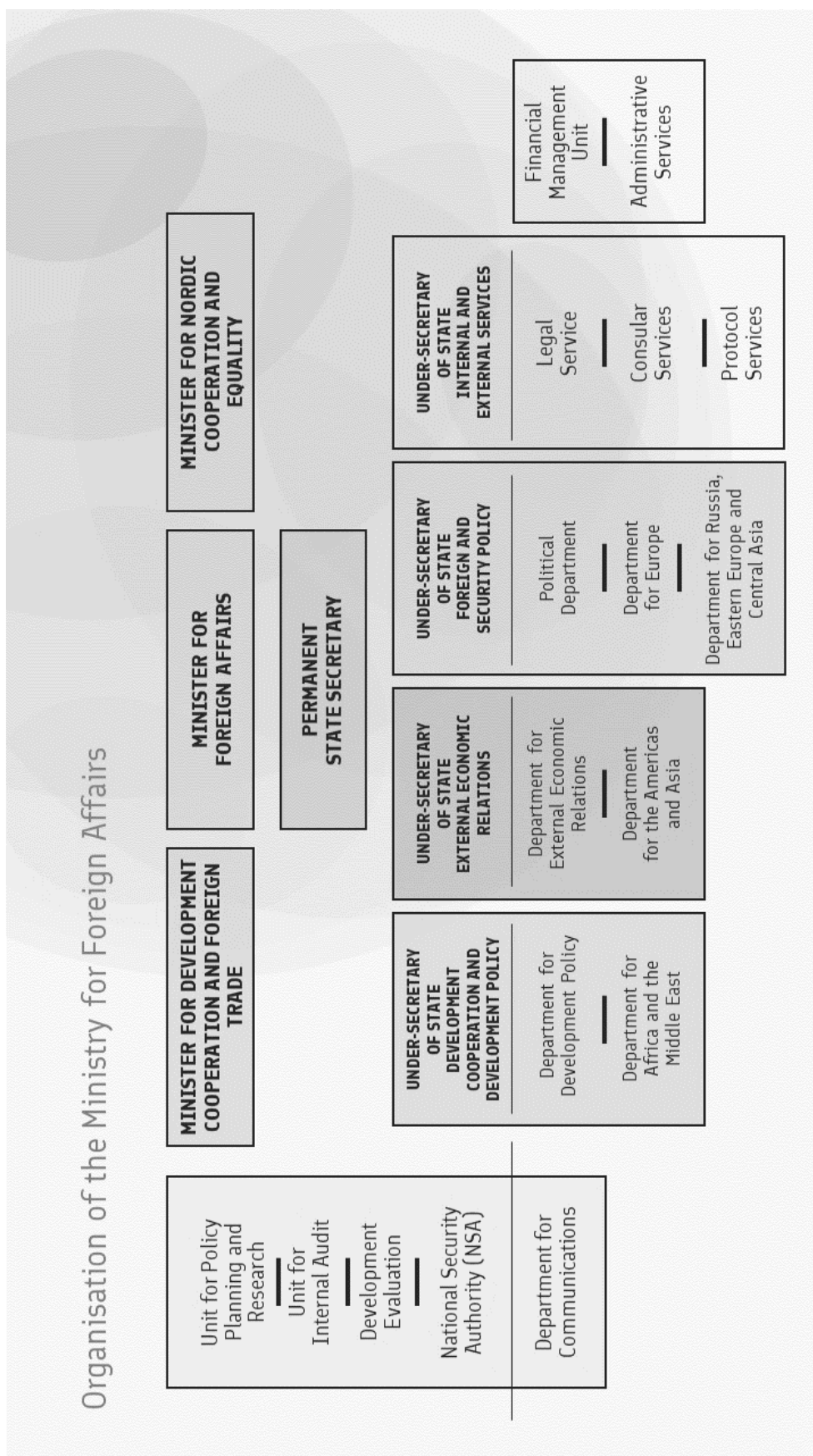
E. Organigramm of the Austrian MFA

Figure 11: The Organization of the Austrian MFA



Source: Austrian MFA. n.d. "BMEIA Organigramm_Zentrale." Accessed May 31, 2020. https://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Zentrale/BMEIA_Organigramm_Stand_April_2020.pdf

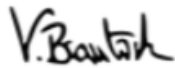
F. Organigram of the Finnish MFA



Source: Finnish MFA n.d. "Ministry." Accessed May 29, 2020. <https://um.fi/ministry>

Pledge of Honesty

“On my honor as a student of the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on it.”



Signature

09.06.2020, Vienna

Place, Date