



Vade-mecum for the use of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the European Union and to the European Atomic Energy Community

I.

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF THE APPOINTMENT OF A HEAD OF MISSION

1.

Requests for approval of the appointment of the Head of a Diplomatic Mission are submitted by verbal note to the Protocol Division of the European External Action Service. The note is accompanied by the candidate's curriculum vitae set out on unheaded paper.

2.

The request for approval is sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Mission accredited to the European Union.

3.

The procedure, which implies the approval from the European External Action Service, the European Commission, the Council of the European Union and the authorities of the Member States of the European Union, generally takes several weeks.

4.

Once the European Union has given its approval, the Protocol Division of the European External Action Service sends a verbal note to this effect to the Mission concerned.

5.

On receiving official notification of approval, the Government of the accrediting State may publish the appointment of its Head of Mission.

II.

ARRIVAL OF THE APPOINTED HEAD OF MISSION

1.

Arrival

The arrival in Brussels of the appointed Head of Mission of a Third Country is a private affair at which the European Union is not officially represented.

2.

Initial contact, first visit and request for audience

a.

Before presenting his/her credentials, the appointed Head of Mission pays a courtesy visit to the Chief of Protocol of the European External Action Service and hands over the true copies of his/her letters of credence for the European Council and the European Commission, as well as his/her predecessor's letters of recall.

The Chief of Protocol informs him/her about the details concerning the official presentation audience.

b.

He/She may also call on the Doyen of the Diplomatic Corps, who will acquaint him/her with local procedures and obligations towards his/her colleagues.

c.

Any other calls he/she may wish to make before he/she officially presents his/her credentials will be of an unofficial nature. In any case, the Ambassador designate should not establish contacts on a political level or with the media.

III.

PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS

1.

The letters of credence of the Heads of Mission of a Third Country must be signed by the Head of State.

Two identical originals of the letters must be drawn up, one addressed to the President of the European Council, the other to the President of the European Commission.

2.

On the day he/she presents his/her credentials, the appointed Head of Mission proceeds by his/her own means to the audience. He/She may be accompanied by one or two members of his/her Mission.

No speeches are made during the presentation.

The Head of Mission hands over his/her predecessor's letter of recall at the same time as he/she presents his/her credentials.

For the presentation, either a dark suit or national costume should be worn.

IV.

AFTER THE PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS

1.

The Head of Mission informs all other Heads of Mission that he/she is taking up his/her duties.

2.

The Head of Mission informs the Presidents of the other institutions of the European Union and the Permanent Representatives of the Member States that he/she is taking up his/her duties and proposes to pay a visit at their earliest convenience.

V.

SENIORITY AND PRECEDENCE

1.

The Papal Nuncio is the Doyen of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the European Union.

2.

The accredited Ambassador of longest standing assists the Doyen as Vice-Doyen and replaces him in his absence.

3.

Where circumstances so require, the Doyen - or, in his absence, the Vice-Doyen - represents the Diplomatic Corps. With the agreement of his colleagues, he may also act as spokesperson for the entire Corps.

4.

Precedence among other Heads of Mission of the same rank is determined by their seniority, i.e. the date and time of presentation of their credentials.

5.

For questions concerning precedence of authorities and officials of the European Union, the Protocol Division of the European External Action Service should be consulted.

6.

Where a member of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the European Union receives Heads of Missions of different Diplomatic Corpses, the Ambassadors accredited to the European Union have precedence over the other Heads of Mission.

7.

Where a member of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the European Union plays host to EU and national dignitaries and Heads of Mission of Third Countries, it is customary for these dignitaries to be alternated with the Ambassadors.

8.

Any doubt over precedence should be referred to the Protocol Division of the European External Action Service.

VI.

MISSION STAFF

All matters related to accreditation of staff of the diplomatic missions to the EU, as well as their privileges and immunities have to be dealt with directly with the Protocol Service of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

VII.

ABSENCE OF THE HEAD OF MISSION

1.

Before absenting himself/herself from his/her post for more than four weeks, the Head of Mission notifies the Protocol Division of the European External Action Service and all other Missions in writing, specifying the name and rank of the official designated as Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

He/She notifies the above bodies on his return.

2.

Should a Head of Mission absent himself/herself for less than four weeks, he/she needs to inform only the Protocol Division of the European External Action Service and the Doyen of the Diplomatic Corps, stating how long he/she will be away and the name and rank of the official designated as Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

VIII.

DEPARTURE OF THE HEAD OF MISSION

1.

When a Head of Mission is recalled by his Government, he/she notifies the Protocol Division of the European External Action Service and all his/her colleagues, stating the name and rank of the official designated as Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

2.

Before leaving his/her post, the Head of Mission sends farewell letters to the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission and calls on the Member of the European Commission and European External Action Service responsible for relations with the State he/she has been representing and the Doyen of the Diplomatic Corps.