

Action Plan**Case number: 2018BE331353****Name Organisation under review: Centre for European Policy Studies****Organisation's contact details: CEPS, Place du Congres 1, Brussels, 1000****Submission date: 05/03/2019****ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)**

CEPS is a leading European Brussels-based think tank covering all European policy areas and providing insights and potential solutions for EU policy making through research, publications and events including the CEPS Ideas Lab. CEPS is a non-profit international association and our board is composed of independent personalities with broad research and policy experience, The board provides the strategic direction of the organisation and supervises its independence, the work of the management team and the financial performance of the organisation. CEPS' funding comes from corporate and institutional membership fees, project research, foundation grants, conference fees and publication sales.

2. Strengths and weaknesses of the current practice

Please provide an overview of the organisation in terms of the current strengths and weaknesses of the current practice under the four thematic headings of the Charter and Code at your organization.

Ethical and professional aspects *

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

Endorsing the HRS4R Charter and Code has provided CEPS with an invaluable opportunity to consolidate and give structure to its Human Resources management, processes and procedures and aspire to the creation of an HR culture of best practice, fairness and transparency. In terms of the organisation's strengths and weaknesses under the thematic heading of ethical and professional aspects, CEPS key strengths lie in its commitment to institutional independence, which in turn is rooted in the individual independence and freedom of its researchers. CEPS does not take positions on issues, allowing researchers total flexibility within their field of expertise. In terms of research freedom, CEPS continues to be firmly committed to

- carrying out state-of-the-art policy research, addressing the challenges faced by Europe
- achieving high standards of academic excellence while maintaining unqualified independence and impartiality,
- providing a forum for discussion among all stakeholders in the European policy process, and to
- building collaborative networks of researchers, policy makers and other stakeholders across the whole of Europe.

Researchers are generally very keen to work for CEPS as this offers them an unique opportunity to gain visibility, develop their reputation and their network in their chosen field and focus on specific areas of interest and relevance to them and have an impact on the European policy-making agenda.

In terms of contractual and legal obligations, CEPS is subject, through regular audits, to close scrutiny in order to ensure the appropriate use of European taxpayer's money.. A great deal of care and attention is paid internally to ensuring that CEPS researchers are aware of and comply with regulations, requirements and conditions, and that they consistently deliver in strict accordance with all contractual obligations.

Finally, CEPS has been able to successfully, albeit progressively initiate and implement a formal performance management process in order to support researchers in improving their professional performance and in developing their profiles both professionally and interpersonally.

Recruitment and selection *

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

CEPS understands that its most important asset is its employees and recognises the importance of an open, transparent and merit-based recruitment and selection process. Since 2018 we have invested a great deal of time and energy in creating a robust, inclusive procedure designed to identify and attract and recruit the most suitable candidates and ensure from the candidates' perspective, that their experience of CEPS is useful and constructive.

Before publishing any vacancy, we make sure that the job advertisement fully reflects the profile of the desired candidate. We try to paint an accurate picture of what the job will entail so that candidates don't waste time applying for a position which will not suit their profile, background and experience. We make sure that the desired criteria are inclusive and welcome applications from researchers of different cultural backgrounds, education, experience and disciplines. Positions at CEPS are systematically published on the Euraxess Portal and posted on Linked-In.

Our recruitment process consists of a series of clearly-defined steps, starting with telephone pre-screening and followed by a structured panel interview with minimum 3 people from diverse professional backgrounds. CEPS pays particular attention to the importance of gender balance when establishing its selection panels. Candidates are also invited to participate in a series of practical tests depending on the job for which they are applying. This can range from a drafting a document in English and creating an Excel spreadsheet to a role play on giving feedback, or making a presentation on the subject of their choice. Candidates are also systematically invited to complete the OPQ psychometric tool on line prior to the interview in order for us to better understand how behavioural aspects of their personality may impact their performance at work. Finally, CEPS systematically requests references from its candidates and offers to provide verbal feedback on their performance during the recruitment process if desired. Once on board, new recruits are supported by our HR Coordinator to help them navigate the challenges of establishing themselves in Brussels and induction training is provided to help them get up to speed with working at CEPS as quickly as possible.

This structured approach is still very new to CEPS and we are working hard to ensure that it is systematically implemented across all units. Currently training all managers, research and administrative staff on the value of candidates' achievements and post-qualification experience and on conducting an effective selection process which does not focus solely on education, knowledge and expertise. We are also working on practical guidelines for giving verbal feedback.

Working conditions *

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

CEPS ensures that the employees are fully covered under the Belgian employment legislation and employees acknowledge that the benefit package offered is attractive. After two years, employees are offered an indefinite contract, in line with Belgian legislation. However, employees do have concerns about the renewal of their employment contracts and their subsequent progression within the organisation and this needs to be addressed through a clearer careers

path policy. The performance management review process that is being implemented should help in ensuring that staff have a dedicated time to discuss their career progression with their supervisors.

Staff raised the issue of work-life balance as an important issue. Diverse initiatives are being put in place to start to address this. A new project development team has been set up that should support researchers in the preparation and coordination of proposals and take over some of the tasks previously carried out by research staff. This is an area where more work needs to be done.

Concerning the research environment, a new IT policy with different IT configuration options for employees will be discussed within the Operational Committee with the aim of better aligning it to the expressed needs of employees. Awareness of the software that is already available for staff needs to be improved.

Another area for improvement that has been identified is internal communication and the staff perceptions of what happens within different units within CEPS. Work has started on improving internal communication within the organisation and this is one of the priorities of the CEPS Operational Committee in 2019. The newly set up Operational Committee provides a forum in which staff can present issues that concern them.

CEPS has recognised the need for a formal gender policy to address issues ranging from representativeness in events, gender-mainstreaming within research, and gender balance within the staff and has included it in the action plan.

Training and development *

Strengths and Weaknesses (max. 800 words)

CEPS has relatively recently developed its Training and Development strategy which is tailored to staff needs identified in an annual training needs analysis and on staff training requests identified in the annual self-assessment process which forms part of CEPS overall performance management activities. Training and Development initiatives are also launched based on the CEPS Competency Model which embraces Research management

Governance and funding

Communication

Influencing and Building Relationships,

Knowledge and Learning

Personal Effectiveness, and

Strategic Focus/Planning for the Future.

The training and development programme is revised on a regular basis and covers subjects related to Research, Processes (such as recruitment), Skills (such as meeting facilitation, networking, presentation skills, project management) and Interpersonal Skills (conflict management, giving and receiving feedback, influencing, assertiveness are just some examples). One of the actions we have identified for the coming year as a result of the HRS4R gap analysis exercise is to grant a certain number of training hours per year to all staff members, as well as a certain amount of time for researchers to attend external events and conferences. We are also in the process of identifying alternative web-based training options that can be made available to staff at their convenience.

3. Actions

The Action Plan and HRS4R strategy must be published on an easily accessible location of the organisation's website.

Please provide the web link to the organization's Action Plan/HR Strategy dedicated webpage(s):

<https://www.ceps.eu/content/opportunities-ceps>

Please fill in the list of all individual actions to be undertaken in your organisation's HRS4R to address the weaknesses or strengths identified in the Gap-Analysis. The listed actions should be concise, but detailed enough for the assessors to evaluate the level of ambition, engagement and the expected implementation process. The institution should strive to provide a detailed plan, not just an enumeration of actions.

Note: Choose one or more of the principles automatically retrieved from the GAP Analysis with their implementation ratings.

Proposed ACTIONS		
Action 1 Publish the CEPS integrity statement, include in all employment contracts and insert into the revised CEPS House Rules document distributed to new employees and published on the intranet.	GAP Principle(s) (+/-) 2. Ethical principles	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester) end 12/2019
	Responsible Unit Communications, HR	Indicator(s) / Target(s) publication on the website, integration into the standard contract template to be signed by all employees.
Action 2 Implementation of a formal Code of Ethics, in addition to the existing integrity statement to be discussed by the Operational Committee and a decision made on its adoption by the end of 2019 for implementation in the first quarter of 2020	GAP Principle(s) (+/-) 2. Ethical principles	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester) 12/2019
	Responsible Unit Operational Committee, Strategy Board, Director of Research	Indicator(s) / Target(s) Publication on CEPS website

Proposed ACTIONS		
Action 3 Editing team in cooperation with the IT Manager to identify the options with regard to an affordable anti-plagiarism software and make recommendations to the Operational Committee by September 2019	GAP Principle(s) (+/-) 3. Professional responsibility	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester) end 09/2019
	Responsible Unit Editing Team/IT	Indicator(s) / Target(s) Systematic use of the chosen software by all research units. Ad hoc monitoring.
Action 4 Conduct a formal CEPS-wide awareness and training initiative on the implications of contractual and legal obligations, starting January 2020.	GAP Principle(s) (++) 5. Contractual and legal obligations	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester) end 04/2020
	Responsible Unit Finance and Administration	Indicator(s) / Target(s) Attendance of all staff, follow up questionnaires.
Action 5 Explore the potential benefits of using on-line streaming and the creation of more formalised partnerships with media providers and civil society in order to bring our research to the general public and	GAP Principle(s) (+/-) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester) end 12/2020

Proposed ACTIONS

make a proposal as part of the revised Communications Strategy, ready for implementation of a pilot study by the end of 2020.

Responsible Unit Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Communications

Action 6

Finalise the CEPS anti-harassment policy for circulation to all staff and publicise the internal support procedure on the CEPS intranet.

GAP Principle(s)

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

(+/-) 10. Non discrimination

12/2019

Responsible Unit Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Human Resources publication on the CEPS intranet

Action 7

Establish a pilot group to test out, then train colleagues in their respective units on the CEPS PiiQ performance management platform. Train all staff on effective use of the platform (by end June 2019) and ensure that all staff have at least two interim discussions with their supervisor on their performance by end October 2019.

GAP Principle(s)

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

(+/-) 11. Evaluation/ appraisal systems

10/2019

Responsible Unit Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Human Resources All current staff trained and using the platform ready for the 2019 evaluation exercise start 12/2019

Proposed ACTIONS		
Action 8	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Create a template to enable research staff and supervisors to provide structured verbal feedback to both successful and unsuccessful candidates as part of the OTM-R process implemented at CEPS.	(+/-) 15. Transparency (Code)	06/2019
	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	Human Resources	Guidelines for feedback/template available on the intranet. Monitor number of feedback sessions conducted.
Action 9	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Run 3 information sessions for all staff on the CEPS recruitment procedure and reinforce key messages around the importance of implementing OTM-R principles systematically across the organisation starting 05/2019	(+/-) 16. Judging merit (Code) (++) 17. Variations in the chronological order of CVs (Code) (++) 18. Recognition of mobility experience (Code) (++) 19. Recognition of qualifications (Code) (++) 20. Seniority (Code)	end 12/2019
	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	Human Resources	All staff to have attended by end 12/2019

Proposed ACTIONS		
Action 10		
Set up a fair and transparent bonus scheme based on performance assessment.	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
	(+/-) 22. Recognition of the profession	12/2020
	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	Finance and Administration, Strategy Board Staff satisfaction survey.	
Action 11		
Refine/further develop career path trajectory options for researchers and non-research staff, to be published on the CEPS website and implemented consistently across units.	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
	(+/-) 22. Recognition of the profession (-/+) 28. Career development (-/+) 30. Access to career advice	06/2020
	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	Human Resources, Research Units, HRS4R Task Force	publication on CEPS intranet/website
Action 12		
Carry out a review of IT options, including PCs, access to databases and to dedicated software (e.g. extension of licences, potential to access a work computer from home, introduction of new software). Work is currently ongoing by IT department. Proposals to be	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
	(+/-) 23. Research environment	10/2019

Proposed ACTIONS

submitted by end July 2019 ready for start of implementation in October 2019.

Responsible Unit Indicator(s) / Target(s)

IT, Research Units Research staff satisfaction survey - all staff to have the equipment they need in order to work in an optimal way.

Action 13

Develop and propose a transparent policy with regard to overtime and travel time for implementation end September 2019

GAP Principle(s)

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

(+/-) 24. Working conditions

09/2019

Responsible Unit Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Human Resources publication of the policy on internet

Action 14

Develop and propose a transparent policy with clear criteria on the option to take sabbatical leave.

GAP Principle(s)

Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)

(+/-) 24. Working conditions

12/2019

Responsible Unit Indicator(s) / Target(s)

Human Resources publication on the intranet

Proposed ACTIONS		
Action 15 Develop and publish CEPS policy on flexible working hours and teleworking.	GAP Principle(s) (+/-) 24. Working conditions	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester) 12/2019
	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	Human Resources publication on the intranet	
Action 16 Identify clear criteria for the definition of salary bands, linked to experience, seniority, market conditions and expertise	GAP Principle(s) (+/-) 26. Funding and salaries	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester) 06/2022
	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	Finance and Administration, Human Resources publication on intranet.	
Action 17 Develop and publish a gender equality policy on the CEPS internet, as part of a ongoing process to sensitise people to gender-related issues at work.	GAP Principle(s) (+/-) 27. Gender balance	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester) 12/2020

Proposed ACTIONS	
Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Human Resources, Research Units	Publication on CEPS internet, gender balance at Senior Management level.
Action 18	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Draw up a plan to support research staff in receiving career advice for implementation as of January 2021. This could include identifying potential partners who would be willing to cooperate on career guidance issues, career coaches and outsourcing	
GAP Principle(s)	
(-/+) 30. Access to career advice	12/2020
Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Human Resources	Joint initiative/partnership in place. Policy published on the CEPS intranet.
Action 19	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
Internal discussions to be held with the editorial team as well as within units to clarify issues related to ownership, which can then be extended to the entire organisation. One unit has developed a co-authorship policy which be reviewed and subsequently extended across the organisation by end 2019.	
GAP Principle(s)	
(-/+) 32. Co-authorship	12/2019
Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Research Units, Strategy Board	co-authorship policy published on the intranet and incorporated into the House Rules

Proposed ACTIONS		
Action 20 CEPS HR adviser currently handles confidential issues linked to conflicts and staff complaints. However a formal and transparent procedure needs to be established and communicated to all staff. This will be part of the review of the Internal House Rules to be carried out by June 2020.	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
	(-/+ 34. Complains/ appeals	06/2020
	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	Human Resources Procedure published on the intranet	
Action 21 Conduct a follow-up staff satisfaction survey on communication issues.	GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
	(+/-) 35. Participation in decision-making bodies	10/2020
	Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
	Communications, Human Resources, HRS4R Task Force	% increase in staff satisfaction compared with the survey carried out in 2018

Proposed ACTIONS		
<p>Action 22</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring through the Performance Management process. All managers (eg. senior researchers) must document their conversations with staff in order to demonstrate ongoing support and transfer of knowledge.</p>	<p>GAP Principle(s)</p> <p>(+/-) 36. Relation with supervisors</p>	<p>Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)</p>
	<p>Responsible Unit</p> <p>Human Resources, Research Units</p>	<p>Indicator(s) / Target(s)</p> <p>Staff feedback through the performance management system.</p>
<p>Action 23</p> <p>Further to the staff satisfaction survey conducted in 2018, design a mandatory management development programme for all people managers at CEPS. The format of the development will be adapted to the needs and time availability of the managers in question. Development of the programme by 11/2019 for implementation starting 01/2020</p>	<p>GAP Principle(s)</p> <p>(+/-) 37. Supervision and managerial duties</p>	<p>Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)</p> <p>06/2021</p>
	<p>Responsible Unit</p> <p>Human Resources and Training</p>	<p>Indicator(s) / Target(s)</p> <p>All managers to complete the training, follow up survey on staff satisfaction in 01/2021</p>
<p>Action 24</p> <p>CEPS will introduce guidance in relation to open access publications.</p>	<p>GAP Principle(s)</p> <p>(+/-) 8. Dissemination, exploitation of results</p>	<p>Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)</p> <p>06/2020</p>

Proposed ACTIONS

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
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Operational Committee H2020 project results published in the open access system.

Action 25

Grant a certain number of training hours per year to all staff members, as well as a certain amount of time for researchers to attend external events and conferences.

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
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(++) 38. Continuing Professional Development (+/-) 39. Access to research training and continuous development 12/2019

Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
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Human Resources/Operational Committee Staff have attended the training or participated in a personal/professional development initiative that they requested in the annual appraisal

Action 26

Conduct a 360° feedback evaluation for all people managers at CEPS as part of the Performance Management Development process.

GAP Principle(s)	Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)
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(-/+) 40. Supervision 06/2020

Proposed ACTIONS	
Responsible Unit	Indicator(s) / Target(s)
Human Resources	All managers to have participated in the process and submitted an individual action plan.

Unselected principles:

(++) 1. Research freedom (+/-) 4. Professional attitude (++) 6. Accountability (++) 7. Good practice in research (++) 9. Public engagement (++) 12. Recruitment (++) 13. Recruitment (Code) (+/-) 14. Selection (Code) (++) 21. Postdoctoral appointments (Code) (++) 25. Stability and permanence of employment (++) 29. Value of mobility (++) 31. Intellectual Property Rights (++) 33. Teaching

The establishment of an Open Recruitment Policy is a key element in the HRS4R strategy. Please also indicate how your organisation will use the Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment Toolkit and how you intend to implement/are implementing the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment. Although there may be some overlap with a range of actions listed above, please provide a short commentary demonstrating this implementation. If the case, please make the link between the OTM-R checklist and the overall action plan. (max. 1000 words) *

This point has already been addressed under the heading "Recruitment and Selection"... As CEPS had no formal recruitment and selection approach prior to 2018 we were able to use OTM-R as the basis for our new procedure.

Our recruitment process consists of a series of clearly-defined steps, starting with telephone pre-screening and followed by a structured panel interview with minimum 3 people from diverse professional backgrounds. CEPS pays particular attention to the importance of gender balance when establishing its selection panels. Candidates are also invited to participate in a series of practical tests depending on the job for which they are applying. This can range from a drafting a document in English and creating an Excel to a role play on giving feedback and making a presentation on the subject of their choice. Applicants are also systematically invited to complete the OPQ psychometric tool on line prior to the interview in order to better understand how behavioural aspects of their personality may impact their performance at work. Finally, CEPS systematically requests references from its candidates and offers to provide verbal feedback on their performance during the recruitment process if desired. Once on board, new recruits are supported by our HR

Coordinator to help them navigate the challenges of establishing themselves in Brussels and induction training is provided to help them get up to speed with working at CEPS as quickly as possible.

This structured approach is still very new to CEPS and we are working hard to ensure that it is systematically implemented across all units. currently training all managers, research and administrative staff on the value of candidates' achievements and post-qualification experience and on conducting an effective selection process which does not focus solely on education, knowledge and expertise. We are also working on practical guidelines for giving verbal feedback to our candidates.

If your organisation already has a recruitment strategy which implements the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment, please provide the web link where this strategy can be found on your organisation's website:

URL:

<http://www.yoursite.com>

4. Implementation

General overview of the expected overall implementation process of the action plan: (max. 1000 words)

The Operational Committee of CEPS will be responsible for the implementation of the Action Plan with delegation to appropriate staff members for specific action items. Monitoring of implementation will be overseen by the Task Force on HRS4R, which was set up at the start of the process and includes staff from all areas of CEPS (seniority, function, gender). The action plan should be seen as an evolving instrument. If/when further areas for improvement are identified then these should be incorporated into the action plan with an appropriate time-scale for implementation. As internal communication has been identified as in need of improvement, it would be especially important to ensure that staff are informed and aware of what is taking place and can provide feedback. We have also foreseen to carry out follow-up surveys to measure progress.

Make sure you also cover all the aspects highlighted in the checklist below, which you will need to describe in detail:

Note: Click on each question of the checklist to open the editor.

How will the implementation committee and/or steering group regularly oversee progress? *

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

The Operational Committee meets on a fortnightly basis and progress on the HRS4R action plan will be established as a permanent agenda point for review at each meeting. The HR Adviser will be responsible for liaising between the Operational Committee and the Steering Group/HRS4R Task Force.

How do you intend to involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process? *

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

Stakeholders from all the research units and from all levels will be regularly consulted and updated on the status of the HRS4R plan. Once our plan is accepted, it will be presented at the regular CEPS staff meeting and become a permanent agenda point at the Strategy Board meeting comprising Senior Research Fellows and Heads of Unit. The HRS4R will play a particularly important role in this process, as its members represent researcher of all levels and from different units.

How do you proceed with the alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R? Make sure the HRS4R is recognized in the organisation's research strategy, as the overarching HR policy. *

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

CEPS formalised the role of Human Resources in March 2017. HRS4R forms the basis of CEPS HR Strategy and all HR initiatives are designed to ensure that HRS4R remains the main driver of our HR culture. Any other strategic decisions will be taken bearing in mind CEPS commitment to HRS4R and the action plan that we have established.

How will you ensure that the proposed actions are implemented? *

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

The Operational Committee with the HR Advisor will be responsible for implementing the action. The remit of the Operational Committee is to hold fortnightly meetings on operational aspects of HR, Research Support, Events, Project development, Communication, Membership & IT. The members of this committee are the CEO, Director of Finance & Administration, Head of Communications, Head of Project Development and the Project Development and HR Coordinator. They will systematically follow-up on the action items becoming due. They should also ensure that sufficient resources are made available to enable the implementation and that there is regular communication on progress in the completion & implementation of the action plan to all staff members.

How will you monitor progress (timeline)? *

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

The Task Force on HRS4R will monitor the progress of the action plan. We will organize meetings on a two-monthly basis to follow-up on what has been put into place and also to provide feedback on the measures that have been done. The TF on HRS4R will also play an important role in disseminating information and progress to other staff members.

How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment? *

Detailed description and duly justification (max. 500 words)

Progress will be measured in two ways: monitoring of the initiatives and deadlines by the Operational Committee (fortnightly) and the HRS4R Task Force (steering committee) (every two months), then six monthly focus groups to be attended by staff on a voluntary basis to evaluate the impact of the actions taken and progress made. We will be looking at the policies we have established, attendance at the planned information sessions and one-to-one feedback with all stakeholders in the process. Once we have received the feedback, we will be in a stronger position to take corrective measures and adjust our approach and actions accordingly.

Additional remarks/comments about the proposed implementation process: (max. 1000 words)

CEPS has set itself a challenging HR agenda but is fully committed to the achievement of its objectives.