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## Update on the Comparative Study on the Terms and Conditions of Employment of Foreign Service Officers (FS Study)

2001-05-10 – The Steering Committee of the Comparative Study on the Terms and Conditions of Employment of Foreign Service Officers

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In early March we provided you with an update on the Comparative Study on the Terms and Conditions of Employment of Foreign Service Officers. This study is a collaborative effort by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), the Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers, Citizenship and Immigration (CIC) and the Treasury Board Secretariat.

As we said in March, the objectives of the study are two-fold:

1. To provide a common factual understanding of some of the key comparative characteristics of the nature of the work of Foreign Service Officers and of the environment under which they operate; and
2. To provide comparative data about Canadian public service groups with similar work responsibilities, other foreign services, and a number of private sector and international organizations which have assignments abroad.

### What has been accomplished since our last update?

1. Adele Furrrie Consultants has produced a review of literature focussing on the practices and issues of managing a foreign service assignment process and environment as studied over the past five years. These findings are now being integrated into the Statement of Work of the Comparative Study.
2. Mercer International (Toronto) has been hired to conduct an FS Officer Retention survey with a view to providing an understanding of the scope of the retention issues at DFAIT and CIC, along with the factors and rationale for separation. This will be the first-ever retention survey to be carried out for DFAIT and CIC. The four stakeholders have worked together with Mercer International to develop a retention survey questionnaire, which has now been tested by Focus Groups of DFAIT and CIC FS Officers serving in Ottawa, Beijing, Paris and London.

All FS Officers will be receiving a web-based retention survey questionnaire in the next few weeks that will seek their input on these issues. We urge all FS Officers to respond to the questionnaire as their views are an important element of the Comparative Study. The findings of the retention survey will then be used to further refine the scope of the Comparative Study. The findings will also give us a sound basis upon which to inform our management practices and to prioritize some of the issues for action.

3. Consulting and Audit Canada (CAC) has worked with us to prepare the competitive process for selecting an independent consulting firm to conduct the comparative study. DFAIT will be the actual contracting authority for the study.