

# Another case of British bungling

*From Mr Michael Tracy.*

Sir, The decision by Britain's Department of "Business, Innovation and Skills" to cut scholarship funding for the College of Europe in Bruges from 28 to two annually ([report, February 4](#)) is yet another case of Britain bungling its European Union relationships.

I was a lecturer at the college during the 1980s. The college provided a valuable opportunity for postgraduate students from all over Europe to train together. Many of my students (in agricultural policy) ended up in the European Commission; many now hold responsible positions. Even then, UK representation was thin, for lack of funding. Contrast Spain and Portugal, each of which sent more students than the UK: not yet EC members, they nevertheless saw the opportunity. Then, from the moment of their accession in 1986, they had competent, well-trained young staff to offer.

It is not the case that EU staff once in office privilege their countries' interests. In more subtle ways, the presence (or absence) of efficient individuals raises the prestige of their country of origin. Britain could do with more of that, not less.

Michael Tracy,  
Genappe, Belgium

[Copyright](#) The Financial Times Limited 2010. Print a single copy of this article for personal use. [Contact us](#) if you wish to print more to distribute to others.

FT" and "Financial Times" are trademarks of the Financial Times. [Privacy policy](#) | [Terms](#)  
© Copyright The Financial Times Ltd 2010.

**Financial Times FT.com, 8 February 2010**