



The art of European diplomacy

In parallel with its expanding economic clout, the EU has gradually developed its own common foreign and security policy. While EU countries have long recognised the benefits of acting together in external and defence matters, this has proved complicated to achieve. The European External Action Service (EEAS), established by the Lisbon Treaty, is a major step forward.

Facts and figures

EU countries have long recognised the need to act together in foreign policy and defence matters, in order to defend and promote their interests on the world stage.

The first European Political Cooperation system was launched in 1970.

It was in the 1990s that regional conflicts in Europe and elsewhere, and the fight against terrorism, persuaded EU leaders to create formal instruments for diplomacy and intervention.

The Maastricht Treaty,¹ which came into force on 1 November 1993, established the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)² as the second pillar of the EU.

The Amsterdam Treaty³ (1 May 1999) created the post of High Representative for the CFSP, which was first held by Javier Solana.⁴

The December 2000 European Council in Nice⁵ decided to establish permanent political and military structures to implement common EU policies in this field. These included the Political and Security Committee (PSC) and the European Union Military Committee (EUMC).

The EU has no standing army but relies on national forces for peacekeeping, crisis management and humanitarian missions. It established a number of 1 500-strong battle groups, with two of them always on standby to allow for rapid reaction. The first EU military missions were in the Balkans. Other short-term missions followed in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

However, despite these advances and the High Representative's achievements, the EU was still lacking influence and recognition at the very top level of international diplomacy. In order to remedy this, the new Lisbon Treaty⁶ created a more powerful foreign policy position. Nevertheless, authority over CFSP decisions remains essentially with EU governments. Flexible voting procedures enable individual governments to abstain, or for a group of countries to act on its own in some areas, but key decisions with military or defence implications need a unanimous vote.



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► Down with the death penalty

Campaigning against the death penalty is one of the main priorities of the EU's human rights policy, and a personal mission for Catherine Ashton (See page 2). Despite a worldwide trend towards the abolition of the death penalty, some 58 countries or territories still execute people found guilty of certain crimes. The EU believes this to be cruel and inhumane, a denial of human dignity and integrity, and ineffective in changing criminal behaviour.

In December 2007, the Council agreed to designate 10 October as the European Day against the Death Penalty. The EU uses bilateral trade and other relationships to push for an end to executions. The EEAS will help to coordinate EU policies in different sectors in pursuit of this objective.



EU policy

The Lisbon Treaty, which came into force on 1 December 2009, changed the way the EU conducts its foreign policy. As well as giving the Union its very first 'president', Herman Van Rompuy⁹, it also created a European 'foreign minister' – High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton.¹⁰

She chairs the Foreign Affairs Council and conducts the Common Foreign and Security Policy. In addition, her position as Vice-President of the European Commission ensures consistency between EU institutions in external policy. The High Representative has her own diplomatic corps, the European External Action Service (EEAS),¹¹ which is an autonomous body within the EU, with staff appointed from the European Commission, General Secretariat of the Council, and Member State diplomatic services.

Catherine Ashton put forward her proposal for the structure of the EEAS¹² on 25 March 2010. In April, the General Affairs Council¹³ reached a political agreement, endorsed on 26 July by the Council of the European Union.¹⁴ In June, representatives from the European Parliament negotiated some changes to the original proposal, culminating in the so-called 'Madrid deal'.¹⁵ On 8 July, a large majority of MEPs in the European Parliament approved the Madrid deal.¹⁶

Addressing the Parliament, Catherine Ashton declared: "My vision for the EEAS is one which ensures that when we speak, our voice is heard. And when we engage, our actions make the difference. Our citizens know that in the face of big problems, such as fragile states, pandemics, energy security, climate change and illegal migration, we are more effective together."¹⁷

In September, Catherine Ashton picked 28 ambassadors, seven of them women, charged with representing the EU's interests abroad: 12 were selected from national administrations, and 16 from the European Commission. On 25 October, the General Affairs Council¹⁸ endorsed the final legal acts for the EEAS, with amendments to the staff and financial regulations, as well as to the EU budget for 2010, following agreement by the Parliament.¹⁹ Shortly afterwards, Catherine Ashton announced the make-up of her top management team.²⁰

Everything was ready for the launch of the EEAS on 1 December 2010, exactly one year after the Lisbon Treaty came into force. The launch of the EEAS will enable the EU to become a true "global player"²¹, with a clear, united diplomatic identity.

Organisation and working methods

Under the conditions agreed for the operation of the service, the EU Commissioners for enlargement, development or humanitarian aid, or the foreign affairs minister of the country holding the EU presidency, deputise when the High Representative is unavailable.

Control over EU external co-operation programmes (development and neighbourhood policies) remains the responsibility of the Commission. Proposals for changes in development policy (European Development Fund and Development Cooperation Instrument) are prepared jointly by the EEAS and the Commission.

Recruitment of EEAS staff is based on merit, whilst ensuring a good geographical and gender balance.²² On 1 January 2011, a total of 1 525 civil servants from the Commission and the Council's General Secretariat will be

Instrumental in bringing change

Since its launch in 2007, the Instrument for Stability (IfS) has enabled the EU to become much more active in conflict prevention and peace-building. For instance, in 2007, crisis response programmes were launched in the Middle East, the Western Balkans, the Asia-Pacific region, sub-Saharan Africa, the Americas and the Caribbean. Through the IfS, the EU is currently working in 39 different countries.

Within the IfS, the Peace-building Partnership helps to strengthen civil society's role in reinforcing harmony and stability. As well as its short-term role in crisis management, one of the IfS' long-term goals is to counter global security threats. The IfS budget is just over €2 billion for 2007-2013.

Policy milestones

1970	First European Political Cooperation system
1993	Maastricht Treaty establishes Common Foreign and Security Policy
1999	Amsterdam Treaty creates post of High Representative
2009	Lisbon Treaty creates EU 'foreign minister' and diplomatic service
Future challenges:	
2012	First 'status report' on the EEAS
Mid-2013	The High Representative will table a report on the implementation of staff regulations
2014	Full review of the EEAS



transferred to the EEAS, and 100 new posts created. When fully operational, the EEAS is expected to employ some 6 000 people worldwide. Financially, the EEAS is one of the EU institutions, with its own section in the EU budget, requiring discharge from the European Parliament.

Role of the European Parliament

The European Parliament has been closely involved at every stage of the evolution of the EEAS, from Catherine Ashton's appointment as High Representative onwards. Throughout the process, MEPs have called for political accountability of the service, through the Parliament, and for a high degree of political and budgetary control for Europe's elected representatives.²³

After agreement on the Madrid deal, representing a compromise between MEPs and Member States, Catherine Ashton praised the "constructive engagement of the Parliament and its negotiators whose work has improved the text for the service decision in many ways".

Parliament's demand for accountability and oversight led to agreement that, given the High Representative's heavy workload, in her absence, political deputies (EU Commissioners) rather than officials will be available to report back to MEPs. The budgeting rules (financial regulation) of the EEAS were amended to ensure transparency and financial accountability.

The EEAS and human rights

Catherine Ashton emphasised that the launch of the EEAS will strengthen the EU's hand in pursuing human rights, democracy and the rule of law around the world. "These will run like a silver thread through everything we do externally,"²⁴ she said.

With its integrated structure, the new service should help to ensure that human rights issues are reflected in all areas of EU external action, including CSDP, development and trade. On human rights, as in other areas, Member States need to pull together, with the combined commitment of national governments, the European Parliament and other EU institutions. The High Representative pledged a regular review of work to

make sure that all the available instruments are in use – from human rights dialogues to EU guidelines, from the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights to bilateral assistance and actions in multilateral fora.

The offices of the new External Action Service are expected to be in the European Commission next, in the EU quarter of Brussels.

▶ Did you know that ...

- On 1 January 2011, a total of 1 525 civil servants from the Commission and the Council's General Secretariat will be transferred to the EEAS, and 100 new posts will be created
- When fully operational, the EEAS is expected to employ some 6 000 people worldwide
- In addition to the budgets of the services merged to create the EEAS, a budget of €9.5 million for the last quarter of 2010 has been proposed
- Although the EU has no standing army of its own, collectively its Member States spend more than €200 billion on defence and have 1.8 million military personnel
- For peacekeeping, crisis management and humanitarian purposes, the EU always has at least two battle groups of 1 500 soldiers on standby

▶ Rebuilding Georgia

The EU has been in Georgia since October 2008, monitoring the ceasefire that ended the war between Georgia and Russia in South Ossetia, and helping to rebuild communities. The Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM) is made up of some 250 unarmed civilian monitors plus 800 other staff. The team comprises both men and women, from 26 of the 27 EU Member States, with a variety of civilian, police and military backgrounds. Their mixture of professional skills and experience, together with cultural diversity, has been a big advantage in dealing with a complex situation.

The Mission's first task was to oversee the withdrawal of Russian forces from around the rebel regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Ever since, the team has been patrolling day and night, reporting on incidents, and helping to build confidence and security within the local population. The EUMM has a budget of €49.6 million, and a mandate until September 2011.



Catherine Ashton and Major General Bair with soldiers of the security forces.



Further information

- EU External Action website²⁹
- EU delegations³⁰
- EU in the World portal³¹
- CFSP annual report³²
- EU Security and Defence News³³
- EU missions³⁴
- European Institute for Security Studies³⁵
- European Defence Agency³⁶
- EU foreign and security policy publications³⁷

Communicators' toolkit

- The EU in the world³⁸
- EU in the World YouTube channel³⁹
- Press conference by Catherine Ashton on EEAS⁴⁰
- Catherine Ashton on EEAS following European Parliament vote⁴¹
- CFSP videos⁴²
- Video on CSDP civilian mission⁴³
- Video on EU Food Facility⁴⁴



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1 http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/economic_and_monetary_affairs/institutional_and_economic_framework/treaties_maastricht_en.htm

2 http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/foreign_security_policy_en.htm

3 http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/institutional_affairs/treaties/amsterdam_treaty/index_en.htm

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6 http://europa.eu/lisbon_treaty/index_en.htm

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8 http://www.eeas.europa.eu/top_stories/081010_en.htm

9 <http://www.european-council.europa.eu/the-president.aspx>

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11 <http://www.eeas.europa.eu/>

12 <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/10/st08/st08029.en10.pdf>

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42 http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/cfsp/index_en.htm

43 http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/media/20081125%20ESDP%20Civilian%20Missions.rmvb

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