

Sequel to the Lisbon Treaty for the EU's diplomatic representation?

The new High Representative, Catherine Ashton, has got to work on the forthcoming European External Action Service, but without yet as far as we can tell going into important issues of the EU's presence in the multilateral organizations, which today is an obsolete jumble of ad hoc arrangements. There is something to be done here which goes far beyond the complicated but only secondary matter of reorganisation of Council and Commission staff in Brussels.

The EU is now endowed with international legal personality by the Lisbon Treaty. A first taste of its implications has already been registered at the UN Security Council. In New York as elsewhere in the world the nameplate of the European Commission is now replaced by the nameplate of the European Union. So far not so exciting, maybe. But the next slightly more important step has been for the coordination meeting of the EU and its member states to prepare a position to be presented to the Security Council, which is now presided by the EU Head of Delegation, not by the ambassador of the rotating presidency.

But there are far bigger questions looming up, namely the status of the EU and its member states, and their respective voting weights, in virtually all the world's multilateral organizations, both political and economic. The EU declares its commitment to an effective multilateral world order. But the obsolescence of its representation in most organizations becomes increasingly clearly now an obstacle to just this. The G8, with four EU member states plus the Commission, has now been virtually put to sleep in favour of the G20, which however sees a fairly anarchic degree of effective gate-crashing by various states including yet more from the EU (Spain and the Netherlands). But at least the EU is fully present itself there, now presumably with its two presidents Van Rompuy and Barroso in summit meetings. By contrast the EU has no regular place in the UN Security Council, the IMF or World Bank. Not even the Eurozone has a formal place in the IMF, whereas some smaller EU member states like Belgium have a bigger weight still than China. At the OSCE and OECD the EU is just an observer. On the other hand the Commission is a shareholder and has a director at the EBRD alongside the member states, and it is a member of the FAO. So, today there is

no system, just a set of ad hoc arrangements.

The overrepresentation of the member states and under- or non-representation of the EU itself means that the governing bodies are impaired in their effectiveness and legitimacy. The Obama administration has been described as the most multilateralist in intent of all US administrations of recent decades, but it is also pragmatic, and will not support multilateral organizations that cannot for any reason be reformed. The EU also wants to draw China, India, Brazil and Russia into a new world order. If this is truly so the EU has to be consistent and reform its own presences in the organizations that exist in order to assert itself more clearly and to make way for these newly emerging or re-emerging world powers.

Therefore the new High Representative would be well advised to set up a working group to conduct a thorough review of the status quo, and formulate recommendations over how to bring the EU's status in the multilateral organizations more in line with today's realities and needs. No doubt there should be a schema that sets out a range of short, medium and long-run perspectives. Not everything at once. But there should be a concept, a method and an early start.

by Michael Emerson

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European Neighbourhood Watch Index

Foreign Policy Priorities of the Spanish Presidency of the EU

The Programme for the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union

1 January - 30 June 2010. [Link](#)

[Extracts]

Europe: a global, responsible and supportive player

1. A new period in European Foreign, Security and Cooperation Policy Europe cannot miss the historic opportunity of assuming a relevant role in the configuration of the new international order. And the Treaty of Lisbon provides the necessary instruments to that end: so the European Union can strengthen its relations with its neighbours and strategic partners, consolidate its leadership in multilateral fora, assume its responsibility in conflicting areas and unfold its firm commitment in promoting peace, human rights defence and poverty eradication.

The objective is to reinforce the Union's unity of action, increase its visibility and develop a genuinely common foreign policy, with ambitious goals and effective actions.

The Spanish Presidency will closely collaborate with the President of the European Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to make the most of all the possibilities rendered by the new Treaty.

Smooth communication channels will also be established with the new positions to ensure the most dynamic response of the EU to the crises that might emerge in any potential scenario of conflict.

The Spanish Presidency will make a special effort to endorse the development of a Common Security and Defence Policy and for the EU to reinforce its role as an international referent in terms of crisis management. Along this line, work will continue to increase the Union's civil and military capabilities, specially boosting the work of the European Defence Agency.

In terms of cooperation for development, the Spanish Presidency will advocate for the observance of all international commitments regarding the fight against hunger and poverty, development financing and aid effectiveness. It will also work tirelessly on the implementation of an ambitious European policy with a view to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Conference.

During its Presidency, Spain will also contribute to consolidate the privileged strategic relationship between the European Union and Africa, based on the renewed partnership whose foundation was laid at the Lisbon Summit.

The Union will play an increasingly growing role to promote an active and efficient multilateralism in resolving global problems, specifically, by reinforcing the United Nations system. The Spanish Presidency will give special relevance to the consolidation of the Human Rights Council and the abolition of the death penalty.

The Presidency will, furthermore, act in the fight against climate change in agreement with the global leadership taken by the Union on this issue.

Specifically, during the next six-month period, we shall be responsible for ensuring the strictest development of the agreement to be reached at the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen.

Finally, the Spanish Presidency will foster the prompt conclusion of the commercial negotiations held within the framework of the WTO Doha Round.

[...]

4. Close and balanced neighbourhood relations

The prosperity and stability of Europe and the neighbouring regions are intertwined.

Spain will especially emphasise the defence of the unitary nature of the European neighbourhood policy and boost the balanced progress of its Mediterranean and Eastern dimensions.

Special heed will be taken to the progressive implementation of the advanced status of Morocco and the strengthening of the relations with Israel, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan. And all the efforts to achieve a global solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict will continue to be actively pursued.

The consolidation of the Euro-Mediterranean relation will be promoted by developing the large projects of the Union for the Mediterranean, as well as by implementing its institutional structures.

Efforts will also be made to continue promoting the Eastern Partnership to facilitate the progressive approach of these six countries to the European Union.

In addition, we shall promote the building of a strategic relation with Russia, based on an earnest and constructive approach of our common interdependency. Within this framework of growing cooperation, we shall further the implementation of the roadmaps for the four common areas of the Union with Russia.

5. The Union's enlargement. European support in the Western Balkans

The Spanish Presidency will firmly support the continuity of the EU enlargement process, according to the renewed consensus defined by the European Council in December 2006. Croatia's accession negotiations will be particularly intensified for a prompt conclusion, the negotiations with Turkey will continue at a suitable pace, and the possible initiation of negotiations with Iceland will also be addressed. The integration prospect of other countries from the Western Balkans will be considered as well.

EP Hearing of Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Vice-President designate for the Commission

Written answers to EP questionnaire [Link](#)

Summary of the EP Hearing [Link](#)

Brussels, 6 and 11 January 2010.

[Extracts]

ANSWERS TO EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COMMISSIONER -DESIGNATE Catherine ASHTON

Policy-related questions

4. What are the three main priorities you intend to pursue as part of your proposed portfolio, taking into account, where relevant, the financial, economic and social crisis and concerns related to sustainable development?

The European Union should be a responsible and reliable international partner in a fast changing world. The last year has shown us that we must cooperate and communicate with our partners in order to overcome economic and social difficulties. EU citizens want to see Europe be more active on the international scene. The Lisbon Treaty gives us the opportunity to make our voice stronger and more unified. My major goal in the coming years will be to strengthen the European Union's role as a coherent, capable and strategic global actor. In order to ensure this, I will work closely with the other Commissioners dealing with external relations.

My first priority will be to build the European External Action Service as an efficient and coherent service that will be the pride of the Union and the envy of the rest of the world. I will draw on the talent that already exists in the European Commission and the Council Secretariat, and welcome new colleagues from our 27 Member States to join as well. We need a balanced service that adds value for all of the citizens of the European Union, and that can represent them to the outside world.

Second, the European Union must pull its weight in areas of crisis and conflict, including in the Middle East, the Balkans, Iran, Afghanistan and Africa. I intend to look closely at all our operations and to make sure we are efficient and effective in our use of resources, and that we are joined-up in our approach. My objective is to enhance efficient cooperation and use of the different EU's crisis management tools. We are already playing an important role in the Southern Caucasus. We can act jointly with the US in the Middle East, building on the Quartet activity. In Africa, the Union is already involved in many actions. For example, the Atalanta operation is perceived as a success story on which we can build a more comprehensive policy. The Afghan conflict has to be solved and the Union is committed, both with its military force but also by training police and building health and agricultural infrastructure.

Third, I will seek to reinforce our strong cooperation with strategic partners such as the United States, China, Russia, India, Brazil and Japan. Of course, we may have differences with these countries, but we can also increase our cooperation in order to solve the many challenges we all face. We would also continue to build on the neighbourhood policy which we developed with our close southern and eastern partners.

This approach does not mean that we are forgetting other partners in Latin America, Asia or Africa - the European Union has already developed a network of bilateral relations and agreements with countries across the world. We can use this network and our involvement in the multilateral system to promote our values and interests.

5. What are the specific legislative and non-legislative initiatives you intend to put forward, and according to what timetable? What specific commitments can you make regarding in particular the committees' priorities and requests attached hereto which would fall within your portfolio? How would you personally ensure the good quality of legislative proposals?

I would prepare detailed proposals for the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS), so that the Council can take a decision by the end of April. In close cooperation with the competent Commissioners, I intend to produce a package that will include not only a draft Decision on the establishment of the EEAS but also the required amendments to the Financial Regulation and the Staff Regulations, as well as a draft amending budget for 2010, including amendments related to the setting up of the EEAS.

[...]

The Union is engaged in a number of bilateral and multilateral negotiations with countries such as Ukraine, Russia, China, Thailand that I hope can be concluded as soon as possible. In Latin America, my objective is to sign at sub-regional level. I would also engage in a dialogue with the European Parliament on potential future initiatives with partners and the development of relations with strategic partners.

My approach would not only be geographical but I would also address key "horizontal" issues. As the Lisbon Treaty reinforces the commitments of the European Union to human rights, my objective is to build on our basic values of democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights. I also want to strengthen the early warning and crisis prevention capacities of the European Union by drawing on the expertise of NGOs, and use all the instruments available to strengthen the engagement of the European Union in countering chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear proliferation.

I intend to launch a review of external policy and of external action instruments in key areas. I intend to use such review to identify additional specific legislative and non legislative initiatives which will be required for the Union to achieve its objectives.

SUMMARY OF THE EP HEARING OF CATHERINE ASHTON

Catherine Ashton, the High Representative-designate for foreign policy, was questioned by the Foreign Affairs Committee about the EU diplomatic service, her dual role working for both Council and Commission, and foreign policy issues ranging from energy security to Afghanistan during her three-hour confirmation hearing at Parliament on Monday. Under the Lisbon Treaty, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs is also a Vice-President of the Commission. Some MEPs were concerned about how this double-hatted job would

work, but Ms Ashton saw the combination of roles as "an asset".

"Full scrutiny of Parliament" over European diplomatic service

In her opening statement, she told MEPs the European External Action Service (EEAS) "will be a top priority and not just a bureaucratic exercise", adding that it was a "once in a generation opportunity to build something that brings together all the elements of our engagement – political, economic and military – to implement one coherent strategy" in foreign policy.

[...]

Mr Brok and Ria Oomen Ruijten (EPP, NL) asked her about "the difficulty of pursuing a coherent foreign policy with the overlap between the Commission and the Council". Lady Ashton, however, said the overlapping nature of the post was an "asset". When reporting to Parliament, she would do it as a "Commissioner" but would add a Council perspective.

Coordination between Commissioners in charge of international affairs

Asked how she would establish her leadership over foreign affairs with the other Commissioners in charge of international affairs, she said that the Treaty "is very clear" about responsibilities and that "I take my lead from the Treaty". She reminded MEPs that she would chair the General Affairs and External Relations Council due to meet Monday 25 January.

On the division between strategy and implementation of policies implied by the EEAS, Catherine Ashton said to Franziska Brantner (Greens/EFA, DE) that she would "work with a cluster of Commissioners dividing the work among us and putting the emphasis on implementation such as on development for example". But she added that "strategy falls within my remit".

Afghanistan, Middle-East, Iran

"Afghanistan and Pakistan, Iran, the Middle East, Somalia and Yemen are clearly among some of the top priorities", she said in her opening statement, adding that she intended "to travel to Washington soon, to discuss with Hillary Clinton and other top US officials how we can pull together our strategies and actions on the global issues".

[...]

Asked by Véronique de Keyser (S&D, BE) what she would do with the Council conclusions on East Jerusalem, Baroness Ashton said "the next step in the region is to go where we think we can do more and pull together appropriate solutions".

Describing her initiatives to revitalise the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), she told Dominique Baudis (EPP, FR) and Vincent Peillon (S&D, FR) "We also need to take forward the work started under the UfM, which lived through a difficult time with the blockade of Arab nations in 2009. We will also have to see how the co- presidency of the UfM can be run with the end of the French presidency approaching".

[...]

Energy and EU-Russia relations

“We need to have a strong relationship with Russia”, she told Jacek Saryusz-Wolski (EPP, PL). On energy, she advocated “diversification of sources of supply” as well as a strategy to avoid relying on energy coming solely from Russia. She told MEPs she had on her “a map of the pipelines”.

Human rights

Asked by Heidi Hautala (Greens/EFA, FI), chair of the EP Subcommittee on Human Rights, about her willingness to meet human rights defenders in public when travelling in her job, she replied “my interest is in outcomes”. More specifically, she said, “this does not mean I would turn away from human rights, although sometimes talking to people without full publicity can be more effective”.

To concerns voiced by Richard Howitt (PES, UK) about the need to improve the EU’s record in this field, Baroness Ashton said “the Commission’s delegations have a critical role to play here although human rights sometime require different approaches”.

EP Hearing of Stefan Füle, EU Commissioner-designate for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy

Written answers to EP questionnaire [Link](#)

Summary of the EP Hearing [Link](#)

Brussels, 6 and 12 January 2010.

[Extracts]

ANSWERS TO EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COMMISSIONER - DESIGNATE Štefan FÜLE

Policy-related questions

4. What are the three main priorities you intend to pursue as part of your proposed portfolio, taking into account, where relevant, the financial, economic and social crisis and concerns related to sustainable development?

The perspective of joining the EU is a powerful means to encourage political and economic reform in all candidate countries. The enlargement process serves the interests of the European Union by providing an anchor of stability especially during difficult times in regions of strategic importance to the EU. It is vital that we work together with the countries and peoples involved to alleviate the impact of the financial and economic crisis and to ensure that future growth is sustainable, as well as building stable societies based firmly on democracy and the rule of law.

My main task will be to ensure that any future accessions are solidly prepared and strengthen the Union’s further development. We need to pursue an enlargement process based on the commitments we have made and the conditionalities

that have been set, as stated in the renewed commitment for Enlargement.

From 19 December, young people and other citizens from three partner countries (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro) can travel to the EU without burdensome visa requirements. This will help to familiarise them with the values prevailing in the EU and facilitate contacts with their counterparts in the EU. Preparations for visa liberalisation can lead to decisive progress in areas like border management and the fight against organised crime and corruption.

Turning to my future work with particular partner countries, Croatia should be able to fulfil its goal of concluding the accession negotiations next year, provided it fulfils all the required conditions. Some of the most challenging conditions are in the fields of judicial reform and fundamental rights.

I am also committed to taking forward the accession negotiations with Turkey, in line with the Negotiating Framework. Further progress in the negotiations will require Turkey to step up efforts to meet established conditions including full non-discriminatory implementation of the Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement. It is particularly important that Turkey gives concrete support to the negotiations under the auspices of the UN aimed at a fair, comprehensive and viable settlement of the Cyprus problem. I will mobilise all means available to the Commission to support these negotiations.

I hope that the Member States will soon be in a position to open accession negotiations with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in line with the Commission’s recommendation. Sustained efforts are however needed in order to resolve the name issue with Greece. Regarding Iceland, I will submit a comprehensive, objective and rigorous Opinion to the College in early 2010.

My priority for the potential candidates of the Western Balkans will be to further promote reform and good neighbourly relations, complete the network of Stabilisation and Association Agreements and pursue the path towards visa liberalisation (together with my colleague in charge of home affairs). I will also undertake the necessary groundwork to prepare comprehensive, objective and rigorous opinions on the applications for membership from Montenegro and Albania and respond similarly to any future request from the Council to prepare such opinions for other applicants. I am committed to using all available EU instruments to support Kosovo’s progress, without prejudice to the question of its status. Finally, given the recent progress regarding the Interim Trade Agreement with Serbia, I hope that the necessary pre-conditions will be met to allow for the start of the ratification process of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement already in summer 2010 thus allowing our relations with Serbia to enter a new era.

While each country will be judged on its individual merits, it is also clear that particular consideration needs to be given to the regional aspect of our work and regional cooperation can further both political stabilisation and economic development.

Under the new Lisbon Treaty, the EU has specifically committed itself to building a special relationship with its neighbours.

My aim is to enhance the effectiveness and visibility of the European Neighbourhood Policy, and step up efforts to bring stability and prosperity to the neighbourhood where I will of course wish to work particularly closely with the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President of the European Commission and the European External Action Service.

The key will be to accompany reforms in the partner countries even more closely, with more frequent contacts at all levels.

We will intensify our relations with the countries of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) and of the Southern Mediterranean, by working with each of them bilaterally towards closer political cooperation and deeper economic convergence with the EU. Differentiation, recognising the individual efforts of each country, is key to maintaining our partners' commitment to this policy and a real sense of joint ownership.

I am determined to draw on the rich diversity of instruments now available to support the development of more active partnerships with these countries. While the bilateral track will continue to be core of our activities, the multilateral dimension offers new opportunities to support reforms and common action. The flagship projects foreseen under both the EaP and the Union for the Mediterranean should be used to bring mutual benefits to ourselves and our partners. Our initiatives in the Black Sea Synergy and Northern Dimension frameworks can also increase the EU's contribution to cooperation in these regions.

While it is essential maintain a clear distinction between enlargement and neighbourhood policies, it is already clear that some of the same instruments can support reform in both candidate countries and the neighbourhood. We should build on this, with a cross-fertilisation of ideas between the two processes.

5. What are the specific legislative and non-legislative initiatives you intend to put forward, and according to what timetable? What specific commitments can you make regarding in particular the committees' priorities and requests attached hereto which would fall within your portfolio? How would you personally ensure the good quality of legislative proposals?

[...]

On Enlargement, my main legislative activity will be the preparation of the Accession Treaties. If negotiations with Croatia, Iceland and others end successfully, I would present the relevant Accession Treaties to Parliament. The timing will depend mainly on both countries making the necessary progress to enable the signing of Accession Treaty with them. Parliament's consent is an essential part of this process.

On the Neighbourhood Policy, the presentation of the annual package comprising a forwardlooking strategy paper and progress reports on our partner countries will be an opportunity to enhance the Commission's dialogue with Parliament. I intend to prepare, negotiate Association Agreements/deep

and comprehensive Free Trade Agreements with the Eastern Partnership partners that are ready to enter into these commitments. The European Neighbourhood Policy action plans, which provide our working agenda for each country, will be upgraded according to developments. If Belarus engages in sustainable and irreversible democratic reforms, we should also upgrade our contractual relations with this neighbour.

Where we already have an agreement with Mediterranean ENP partners to upgrade relations, the immediate priority is to enhance their Action Plans. In parallel, I would like to complete the conclusion of the Association Agreement with Syria and conclude a framework agreement with Libya.

More generally, I intend to work with Commission colleagues to introduce other measures to enhance stability and prosperity in the EU's neighbourhood, e.g. in the fields of mobility of people and energy security.

As regards financial assistance for pre-accession and the neighbourhood Countries, I will make sure that preparations are started early for an extension of the current Instrument for Pre-Accession Aid (IPA) as well as the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) for the new financial perspectives. I would wish to feed into this the results of our regular evaluations of the Instruments in order to ensure a further increase in the efficiency of our aid and the good quality of the legislative proposals that subsequently emerge. More generally, I am conscious of the need to ensure that our assistance is implemented in line with the principles of sound and efficient management and look forward to a regular dialogue with you and your colleagues in the Committee on Budgetary Control on this issue.

SUMMARY OF THE EP HEARING OF STEFAN FÜLE

Štefan Füle, the Commissioner-designate for EU enlargement and neighbourhood policy, was quizzed by MEPs on Tuesday 12 January about his ideas on enlargement, the state of play in negotiations with Turkey, the prospects for accession of the Western Balkans, cooperation with the High Representative and his professional experience.

Mr Füle described himself as a "champion of a thorough-going reunification" of the European continent. "The shadow of the iron curtain that fell in 1989 only really disappeared with the enlargement" of 2004, he told Members of the EP Foreign Affairs Committee.

Enlargement policy

[...]

During the hearing, several MEPs including Hannes Swoboda (S&D, AT) stressed the need for the Commission to take steps to counter the enlargement "fatigue" being expressed by public opinion in Europe. "We must be clearer about enlargement and demonstrate its benefits, otherwise we are heading for failure", Mr Füle told MEPs.

[...]

He told MEPs that he would recommend in the course of 2010 that Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina be added to the list of countries whose citizens should not require visas to enter the EU. He also wanted to launch “a structured dialogue with Kosovo” on this matter, “although I will bear the safety of our citizens in mind”, he said in an answer to Ulrike Lunacek (Greens/EFA, AT).

“Enlargement is more than just a public policy and more than a Commissioner’s portfolio. It has transformed my country, my life and the whole of Europe”, said the Czech candidate, who nevertheless stressed that “there are not and there should not be any shortcuts to accession”.

[...]

Negotiations with Turkey

“Religious freedom will be part of the key criteria on which I will focus with Turkey and also with other countries”, was Mr Füle’s response to Bastiaan Belder (EFD, NL), who voiced concern about discrimination against the Christian minority in Turkey.

On the Ankara protocol, which has not been signed by Turkey, and on the Cyprus question, the Commissioner-designate called on MEPs to “allow me time to try and settle the issue using my contacts”. He undertook to “report” to MEPs on the talks. He also indicated that “accession negotiations are a good opportunity for the EU to clarify” what it expects from Ankara, which is still a crucial partner in the field of energy.

To a question by Mirosław Piotrowski (ECR, PL) on whether Turkey could actually become a fully-fledged member of the EU, Mr Füle replied “Yes, I can very well imagine that. The EU’s credibility is at stake but so is Turkey’s: it must meet all the conditions. It will be a modern and reformed Turkey and its accession will be of benefit to both sides”. However, given the divergent views of MEPs on this issue he said he would be willing to discuss it with them.

Mr Füle clearly ruled out a “privileged partnership” with Turkey, in a response to Parliament’s rapporteur on Turkey, Ria Oomen-Ruijten (EPP, NL).

Neighbourhood policy

In his opening remarks, the candidate Commissioner made clear his wish to “devote as much attention to our neighbours in the east as to those in the south”.

On Ukraine, he had an “open mind” regarding any link between the country and Article 49 of the Treaty (which defines accession conditions) “even if this country does not, of course, meet the Copenhagen criteria”, he stressed. He added that “the eastern partnership helps bring this country closer to the Union”.

On developments in Belarus, he told Andrzej Grzyb (EPP, PL), who spoke on behalf of the Human Rights Subcommittee, that “this country still has a long way to go to integrate with our activities”. He pointed out that Belarus was only taking part in the eastern partnership at this stage.

To Willy Meyer Pleite (GUE/NGL, ES), who asked about human rights violations that he said had been committed by Israel and Morocco, Mr Füle said he shared his concerns but believed that “if you halt dialogue, you can’t take the issues forward”.

“I firmly believe that the neighbourhood policy gives us a coherent approach which ensures that the whole EU is committed to deepening relations with all [its] neighbours, while still allowing us to tailor our relations to each country’s circumstances”, he said.

Eastern partnership

Mr Füle saw cooperation with the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly, which is chaired by Kristian Vigenin (S&D, BG), as one of the channels for “giving impetus” to the eastern partnership launched in Prague in May 2009.

Answering a question by Renate Weber (ALDE, RO) about the fate of the secessionist regions, Mr Füle explained that “the eastern partnership was not designed to settle frozen conflicts but that should not prevent us helping those countries to resolve their issues”.

Cooperation with other Commissioners responsible for international questions

When asked how his field of activity would dovetail with that of the High Representative, Mr Füle said he saw Georgia as “a test case”, as it involved “reconciling crisis management”, an area that comes under Lady Ashton, and the policy for the region conducted by the competent Commissioner.

On Georgia, he assured Inese Vaidere (EPP, LV), who was concerned about the human rights situation in the country, that “the EU must play a stabilising role in the region and repeat again and again that we support the territorial integrity of Georgia”.

EP Hearing of Karel de Gucht, EU Commissioner-designate for Trade

Summary of the EP Hearing [Link](#)
Brussels, 11 January 2010.

[Extracts]

Strengthening the multilateral trading system

Mr De Gucht’s priorities, he said, were: to further strengthen the multilateral trading system; to deepen trade and investment links, in particular with India, Canada, Ukraine, Latin America and Euromed; to take to a higher level the economic cooperation with the US and China; to successfully conclude the Economic Partnership Agreements with ACP countries; and to ensure that European companies were treated fairly and given opportunities to expand their businesses.

[...]

Support for Russia’s WTO membership, if criteria are met

Answering questions by Jan Zahradil (ECR, CZ), Mr De Gucht said he supported Russia's WTO membership but it was up to Russia to comply with all the criteria. On energy security, he underlined the need for dispute settlement provisions to be included in free trade agreements with Russia and Ukraine. He added that he would also focus on dismantling non-tariff trade barriers.

Ukraine Presidential Elections: Results of the first round

Source: Ukraine Central Election Committee
Ukraine, 17 January 2010. [Link](#)

Viktor Yanukovich and Yulia Tymoshenko won the first round of the Ukrainian presidential elections on 17 January, 2010. In total, 18 candidates took part in the election.

<i>Candidates</i>	<i>Percentage of Votes</i>
Viktor Yanukovich	35.32
Yulia Tymoshenko	25.05
Sergij Tigipko	13.05
Arsenij Yatsenyuk	6.96
Viktor Yushchenko	5.45
Others	14.17

ODIHR preliminary conclusions on Ukraine elections

International Election Observation Mission
Ukraine, 17 January 2010. [Link](#)

The first round of the 17 January presidential election in Ukraine was of high quality and showed significant progress over previous elections. This election met most OSCE and Council of Europe commitments. Civil and political rights were respected, including freedom of assembly, association and expression. Election day was conducted in an efficient and orderly manner.

This election saw a diverse field of candidates representing alternative political views, offering a genuine choice to the electorate. Candidates were able to campaign freely across the country without impediment. The campaign period was generally calm and orderly. Unsubstantiated allegations of large-scale electoral fraud negatively affected the pre-election atmosphere and voters' confidence. In contradiction with the law, administrative resources were misused by candidates in official positions. More transparent campaign financing is necessary during the pre-election period.

By voting in large numbers and freely expressing their will, Ukrainians have shown the desire to decide on the course of the country. The intertwining of political and economic interests had a negative influence and undermined public confidence in the political process, posing a challenge for Ukraine's leadership.

Election rules have to be set clearly and should not be a permanent subject of discussion. Regrettably, a unified

election code has not yet been adopted in Ukraine. The existing election law as amended in August 2009 was a step backward compared to previous legislation. As a result, the legal framework remains unclear and incomplete. Last minute court decisions contributed to a lack of clarity in the procedures. However, if implemented in good faith and in a non-restrictive manner, the legislation could provide a basis for holding democratic elections.

Freedom of expression significantly improved since 2004. Overall, the pluralistic media environment offered voters a variety of information about leading presidential candidates and their platforms. The media was subject to heavy financial pressures and economic interests. The coverage by the electronic media was often not determined on the basis of newsworthiness, but rather as a result of candidates paying to appear in the news or current-affairs programmes.

Despite a delay in funding, the election commissions were generally efficient in meeting tight deadlines while coping with a heavy workload. The Central Election Commission (CEC) mostly operated in a non-partisan and collegial manner, although in a highly polarized political environment. The CEC did not fully address the shortcomings of the law, at times leaving the District Election Commissions (DECs) and Precinct Electoral Commissions (PECs) without proper guidance. Some actions of the CEC lacked the required transparency.

In a positive development, for the first time a State Voter Register was established and the election and state administration made considerable efforts to decrease the number of multiple registrations of voters and to improve the overall quality of voter lists.

Throughout the campaign, candidates rarely used the legal means available to them in the electoral legislation to address their complaints. The administrative courts adjudicated election-related cases in a timely and transparent manner, meeting tight deadlines and providing plaintiffs effective remedies. The CEC did not address complaints in a transparent manner and answered most of them without a formal decision, thus denying access to effective remedies.

The presence of domestic observers significantly increased transparency. Non-governmental organizations monitored the elections despite the fact that they were not permitted by the election law to register their members as observers.

Women were well-represented in the leadership positions of the election administration. The election day was orderly and calm. Voting and counting was assessed as overwhelmingly positive by observers.

European Commission statement on the presidential elections in Ukraine

European Commission press release
Brussels, 18 January 2010. [Link](#)

The Commission welcomes the positive conduct of the first round of the presidential elections in Ukraine on 17 th January,

2010. In this regard it notes the assessment of the election made by the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission.

The Commission welcomes in particular the fact that Election Day was preceded by a vigorous campaign which presented the voters with a genuine choice; that the elections took place in a peaceful atmosphere and that there was a high turn out of voters.

The Commission expects that the leaders of Ukraine will ensure that the next round of voting on 7 th February will take place in a similarly peaceful environment and that it will build on the positive aspects of the first round.

The Commission therefore calls on the authorities to implement the recommendations of the preliminary statement of the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission in a timely manner.

The European Union will continue to support Ukraine in its democratic development and looks forward to the further deepening of EU-Ukraine relations.

EU and Moldova launch negotiations on an Association Agreement

EU press release

Chisinau, 12 January 2010. [Link](#)

These negotiations reflect the positive evolution of political and economic relations between the EU and Moldova, and the opportunity to widen and deepen cooperation under the Eastern Partnership.

The future agreement will deepen the political association and economic integration of Moldova and the EU. Its principal objective will be to draw Moldova closer to the EU through commitments across a range of areas, based on a strong degree of approximation to EU laws and standards. These areas will include enhancing political cooperation, reinforcing joint measures in migration, asylum, border management, drugs and crime, expanding economic relations, and increasing co-operation in critical sectors such as energy, environment, transport and public health, with a direct impact on citizens' daily lives and on the business environment.

These negotiations take place against the background of increasing bilateral trade over the past years (trade with the EU accounts for over half of total Moldovan trade) and a significant increase of EU assistance to Moldova.

The negotiating teams will be led by Gunnar Wiegand, Director of the European Commission, External Relations Directorate General for the EU, and Natalia Gherman, Deputy Foreign Minister, for Moldova. Talks will be structured to cover the general objectives and principles of EU-Moldova Relations in plenary sessions, and working groups have been set up on Political Dialogue and Co-operation on Foreign and Security Policy, Justice, Freedom and Security issues, Economic Co-operation, and People-to-People contacts (including areas such as education and research).

The EU reaffirmed its objective to negotiate and establish a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), when the relevant

conditions are met, and underlined the importance for Moldova to carry out the necessary reforms.

Russia-Belarus agreement on crude oil deliveries to Belarus

Russian presidency press release

Gorki, 27 January 2010. [Link](#)

[Extract]

PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA DMITRY MEDVEDEV: Mr Sechin, I'd like to discuss an issue that has recently elicited many discussions in our relations with Belarus. The issue is that of oil deliveries. The President of Belarus addressed me through a letter on this matter. I replied by outlining our suggestions, which could serve as a basis for resolving the issue of regulating these deliveries.

What are the outcomes? Today, you worked with your colleagues from Belarus. Please tell me how it went.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OF RUSSIA IGOR SECHIN: In accordance with your instructions and your message to the President of the Republic of Belarus, we have been engaged in active talks with our Belarusian partners over the last two months. These talks were overseen by yourself and the Prime Minister. Today, it is my pleasure to inform you that as a result of this work, we were able to sign documents regulating duty-free deliveries of Russian oil for Belarus' domestic use in 2010, exactly as you had requested.

We have signed a whole package of documents including amendments to the agreement on crude oil deliveries to Belarus and the method of setting prices for oil sales, including oil transit to third parties. We have also signed the balance of crude oil in 2010. Furthermore, following your instructions and accord from the Belarusian side, my partner in these talks, First Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus Vladimir Semashko, and I also signed a joint statement regarding guarantees for uninterrupted oil transit, which is clearly important to European consumers.

In addition, we signed a protocol on talks instructing our respective departments to continue work in the fuel and energy sector; this agenda will be extended to include cooperation in gas sector and nuclear energy, as well as other matters of our energy cooperation.

DMITRY MEDVEDEV: Very well. My suggestion, the one I formulated at a meeting of the Supreme State Council [of the Union State of Russia and the Republic of Belarus] last year, was that we should give our Belarusian partners the opportunity to work, supplying duty-free oil for domestic use, and at the same time, we must guarantee uninterrupted oil transit to third parties, which would mean resolving a number of related issues. If these matters are now resolved, then we can count this among the agreements that we've signed successfully. It also corresponds to the suggestion I made to President Lukashenko. Nevertheless, I would like to clarify: we haven't sacrificed any of our own interests, have we? Do the decisions you implemented fall in line with our domestic interests?

IGOR SECHIN: Mr President, we followed your instructions while taking into account the interests of Russian companies participating in these talks. That is why our suggestion to supply duty-free oil for Belarus' domestic use, which you formulated at the Supreme State Council, was included in the same set of documents as the suggestion to regulate the rates for oil transit to consumers in Western Europe.

And the document that we signed today, as well as the method for setting the rates, falls in line with those goals. First and foremost, it corresponds with the interests of the Russian companies that provide oil for these deliveries.

We are now implementing a long-term formula for setting the prices, which does not allow for any unilateral increases in rates, preventing, therefore, situations when the parties to economic cooperation agreements have to pay extra money, and it fully guarantees that our interests are taken care of.

Furthermore, we can adjust these volumes, and we have agreed (as noted in the documents we signed) that in September (before October 1) we will further revise oil consumption volumes and rates policy.

Russian Duma ends opposition to Strasbourg court

Russian Duma press release
Moscow, 15 January 2010. [Link](#)

[Extract]

Having ratified Protocol#14 concerning the reform of the European Court of Human Rights / Strasbourg Court / the State Duma will engage in improving the effectiveness of the internal mechanism of human rights protection. This is the statement made by Pavel Krashennikov, member of the United Russia and the chairman of the Duma Committee on civil, criminal, arbitral and procedural legislation.

He also noted that the deputies were able to ratify the protocol due to the December decision by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. "Having said that, we intend to continue improving the effectiveness of the internal mechanism of protection of human rights, in particular, to address the problems of Russia's legal system". MPs are also preparing to take an active part in improving the mechanisms of the ECHR, in particular, during the upcoming conference in February on further improvement of functioning of the ECHR".

The first State Duma Deputy Speaker Oleg Morozov believes that "the ratification of the Protocol will give a start to the reform of the Strasbourg Court. Improving the effectiveness of European Court will serve as a catalyst and an additional incentive to improve Russia's judicial system... This all will help to ensure that the degree of equity in Russia's society will steadily increase".

First deputy head of the United Russia Vladimir Pekhtin believes that entry into force of the Protocol "will substantially harmonize the work of the Strasbourg Court, including the increase in the number of complaints handled".

The last provisions of the Protocol have raised serious concerns on the Russia's side in 2006, which resulted in the blocking of its ratification by the State Duma. As the Deputy Minister of Justice and representative of Russia in the ECHR George Matjushkin has explained, , the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, as well as Chancellor of the ECHR in September 2009, informed Russia in September 2009 on how the issues of Moscow concern would be dealt with. He said that "a letter signed by the Chancellor of the court stated that a representative of a respondent country, the defendant may take part in considering the eligibility of a complaint

to the work of the ECHR". This implies that a representative of Russia will be among judges when dealing with cases concerning Russia.

With regard to investigation, Russia's position was taken that it would be carried out only in cases of reasonable complaints.

Bureau of Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly Statement on the Middle East peace process Rabat, 22 January 2010. [Link](#)

At its meeting on 22 January 2010 held in Rabat, Morocco, under the Presidency of the Jordanian Senate, the Bureau of the Euro Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) recalled its previous declarations adopted on 4 July 2009 and on 20 November 2009 and adopted the following statement.

The EMPA Bureau:

- is concerned by the continuous suffering of the Gaza civil population which is living under unacceptable humanitarian conditions;
- while considering this far from sufficient welcomes the recent decision of the Government of Israel temporarily to suspend, as a first step, all settlement activity.
- categorically condemns attacks on Israel and Palestine and calls on Israel to prevent settlers from committing acts of violence against Palestinian civil population;
- is seriously concerned by the absence of progress in the Middle East peace process and urges the parties to resume negotiations without delay in order to implement the two-state solution and to find a way, through negotiations, to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of two states; strongly invites Israel to reopen the Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem according to its commitments under the Road Map, as an immediate step;
- calls for the parties to live up to the expectations of their populations by swiftly agreeing on the establishment of an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State, living side by side in peace and security with Israel;
- supports the recent reconfirmation of the EU's position regarding the permanent status issues and the ongoing U.S. efforts to re-launch the peace process in the region, and in this respect emphasises the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative;
- fully supports Egypt in its mediation efforts to achieve a meaningful and lasting reconciliation between the Palestinian political factions;
- recalls that the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly is a unique platform for ongoing dialogue between the representatives of the peoples in the region, thereby contributing to building mutual understanding and confidence.

Mr. Abdel-Hadi MAJALI -
President of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly
Senator of the Jordanian Senate

Mr. Antonio D'ALI – representing Mr SCHIFANI
President of the Italian Senate
Vice-President of the EMPA

Mr. Mustapha MANSOURI -
Vice-President of the EMPA

President of the Moroccan House of Representatives

Mr. Gianni PITELLA - representing Mr BUZEK
President of the European Parliament
Vice-President of the EMPA

EU Assistance to Central Asia: Back to the Drawing Board?

Jos Boonstra, Jacqueline Hale
EUCAM Working Paper, No. 8, January 2010. [Link](#)

EU Conclusions on Bosnia and Herzegovina

Foreign Affairs Council
Brussels, 25 January 2010. [Link](#)

The Council reiterated its full support for the European perspective of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH); and confirmed that Operation ALTHEA was an important part of the EU's comprehensive efforts in BiH to support a political process aimed at enabling BiH, on the basis of the necessary reforms, to continue to move forward in the EU integration process.

The EU underlined its commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina's territorial integrity and sovereignty in accordance with the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement. The Council also declared strong support for the High Representative/EUSR Valentin Inzko and called on all parties in BiH to comply with all decisions taken by him and not to seek to challenge his authority.

The Council recalled the decisive progress made by Operation ALTHEA towards accomplishing its mandate and in particular the completion of the military and stabilisation tasks provided for by the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement; and underlined Operation Althea's significant contribution to the stability and security of BiH. Building on these achievements, the Council decided to start providing non-executive capacity-building and training support, within the framework of the Operation, subject to the completion of the necessary arrangements.

The Council underlined in this context that security sector reform was an important part of the overall reform process in BiH, where EU military engagement through non-executive capacity-building and training tasks would contribute to strengthening local ownership and capacity.

The Council underlined the EU's commitment to supporting BiH efforts to maintain the safe and secure environment. Operation ALTHEA's executive mandate will continue in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1895 (2009). The Council expressed the readiness of the EU, should the situation require, to maintain an executive military role to support these efforts beyond 2010, under a UN mandate.

The Council confirmed that it will continue closely to monitor the situation in BiH. To this end, it intends regularly to review the operation, taking into account the internal situation in BiH as well as developments concerning the international community's presence, including the future role of the EUSR. These elements should be seen as part of the EU's overall engagement and complementary to the wide range of instruments that contribute to a prosperous and secure BiH

[Abstract]

European Union (EU) assistance in general and to Central Asia in particular is a complicated, many sided and fairly opaque business. Over a seven-year period, 719 million Euros were to be set aside for assistance to the region through the new EU Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI). This EUCAM working paper aims to shed light on EU assistance. It addresses the 'what', 'where' and 'how' of EU assistance to Central Asian republics. The 'why' question is beyond the scope of this paper, but stands central in many other EUCAM publications. The paper concludes with recommendations that apply to EU assistance over the medium and long terms.

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