

European Neighbourhood Watch

Issue 93 • May 2013



Thinking ahead for Europe

CEPS European Neighbourhood Watch monthly newsletter focuses on the EU's relations with its geographical neighbours: those in its midst, those included in the enlargement process, countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy and Russia. Each month the newsletter offers a round-up of the previous month's major developments with links to the full text of each corresponding news item, analysis or official document. These links are presented in chronological order. This overview is complemented by an editorial note that focuses on a current development or a more long-term trend pertaining to the EU's relations with its neighbours.

Table of Contents

Editorial: "Facilitated dialogue in the Balkans vindicates the EEAS"

General

Eastern Partnership

Russia

Southern Neighbourhood

Enlargement

**Index of European Neighbourhood
Watch Editorials**

Editorial

Facilitated dialogue in the Balkans vindicates the EEAS

When the prime ministers of Serbia and Kosovo reached their first agreement on the principles governing the normalisation of relations, they not only settled long-standing ethnic enmities in the north of the former Serbian province, they also handed Catherine Ashton a diplomatic victory she badly needed. This was proof of the added value of the European External Action Service (EEAS) as a new EU foreign policy actor.

Plagued by criticism for its slow start, weak internal organisation, failures to link up with certain Commission services, inflated salaries and holiday entitlements, the EEAS has come under fire recently from the European Parliament's Budget Committee, amid reports of irregularities in the procurement procedure of a private security firm's services to protect the EU Delegation in Kabul. None of this reflects well on the EEAS, especially given the wholesale review of the organisation and functioning of the Service by member states, the Parliament and other stakeholders that is currently underway.

Ever since the creation of the EEAS in January 2011, members of the Service, and indeed Ashton herself, have been at pains to show the added value of the new EU body. Success could only be defined in somewhat elusive terms: the constructive role played by the EEAS in the wake of revolutionary protests in the Arab world; the crisis response coordination by EU delegations in third countries hit by calamity or crisis (e.g. the Fukushima nuclear disaster), and the comprehensive approach to tackling complex security and development crises (in the Horn of Africa and Sahel region, for example).

Another success story was that Ashton, supported by the EEAS, was able to keep the 'P5+1' together in nuclear non-proliferation talks with Iran. Sadly, these talks fizzled out in April during the latest round of negotiations in Almaty, and perhaps with them the international consortium of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council + Germany – thereby tarnishing the image of the EU as a new peacemaker on the world stage.

But the agreement between Belgrade and Pristina is a clear-cut and resounding diplomatic success for the EEAS, enabling it to dispel some of this recent criticism.

Significantly, the new deal offers the possibility to close yet another chapter in the recent violent history of the Balkans. Bringing arch rivals Ivica Dačić, a former spokesman of the late Serbian strongman Slobodan Milošević, and Hashim Thaçi, former commander of the Kosovo Liberation Army – both now prime ministers of their respective countries – to the table for direct talks and towards an accord in barely seven months is no small diplomatic feat. It not only sends a strong

CEPS Neighbourhood Watch Editorial address

CENTRE FOR EUROPEAN POLICY STUDIES (CEPS)

Place du Congrès 1,
B-1000 Brussels, Belgium

phone: +32 2 229 39 11

fax: +32 2 219 41 51

website: www.ceps.eu

e-mail: neighbourhood@ceps.eu *Subscribe!*

Editorial team:

Steven Blockmans and Hrant Kostanyan

signal to the countries in the region, but also to the UN, the US, Russia, China and other global players that the EU is serious about stabilising its immediate neighbourhood. And a worthy laureate of the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize.

Much credit for the positive outcome of the EU facilitated dialogue has to go to Catherine Ashton herself. Her leadership and dedication were critical to bringing about this important agreement. Declaring an end to the formal discussions when the parties failed to reach an agreement in the eighth round of the EU facilitated dialogue on April 2nd, Ashton sent Dačić and Thaçi home with the message that the onus lay with them. If they wanted Commissioner Füle and herself to advise the Council to open the door to closer relations with the EU, then they had about two weeks 'to step over their own long shadows' and rally their constituencies behind a compromise. Ashton gambled and won. Two more rounds of talks under her leadership were needed to hammer out a deal, sanctioned by the General Affairs Council of April 22nd. The agreement will partly define Ashton's legacy as the first High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission.

To be fair, this was no solo effort. The first meeting of the dialogue foreseen in UN General Assembly Resolution 298 was in fact held on 8-9 March 2011, with the facilitation of a small team led by Robert Cooper, then counsellor of Ashton. Over the course of 12 months, Cooper chaired nine meetings at the level of heads of delegation. Further gatherings were held in various technical working groups. In this first phase of the EU facilitated dialogue, both sides struck agreements in a number of areas: civil registry; freedom of movement; acceptance of university and school diplomas; customs stamps and cadastral records; and integrated border management. The agreement on regional representation and cooperation of 24 February 2012 allowed Kosovo – under the new denomination 'Kosovo*' to participate and sign new agreements on its own account and to speak for itself at all regional meetings.

The EU facilitated dialogue was suspended for six months to take account of the May 2012 general and presidential elections in Serbia. The electoral victory of the nationalist SNS party led Ashton to ratchet up the pressure to strike a deal. The thinking was that any agreement concluded by the two countries' nationalists would have the greatest chance of sustaining the pressures of domestic politics and time. Hence the decision to invite the political leaders themselves, and not just their envoys, to participate in the second phase of the EU facilitated dialogue. The main incentive Ashton used to wheedle Kosovo towards an agreement was the possible opening of negotiations on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement. Serbia was offered the prospect of starting membership talks with the EU. Both the Commission and the member states, most vocally Germany, backed Ashton by warning the parties that they would not hesitate to push back the April date for a Council decision if either failed to commit fully to the negotiations.

It is therefore not only the outcome that makes the EU facilitated dialogue stand out as a success, but also the characteristics of the diplomatic process itself: it was high level, high on symbolism (e.g. the Ashton-Clinton trip to

the Balkans at the outset of the dialogue in October 2012), high paced (the EEAS ran a tight schedule with high-level negotiation rounds every month), and high on drama (cf. Ashton's obvious disappointment that Dačić and Thaçi failed to conclude an agreement as a birthday present for her in March).

The facilitated dialogue also shows that, in spite of its image as a latter-day Eldorado marred by deep economic and financial crises, the EU still has enough power of attraction to convince third states to settle their disputes peacefully in return for the prospect of closer relations with the Union.

Steven Blockmans

CEPS Senior Research Fellow and Head of the EU Foreign Policy Unit

*"This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence". The 26-word footnote had required close to two-and-a-half days of almost uninterrupted negotiations to finalise. It is striking that the agreement on the principles governing the normalisation of relations of April 19th, initialled by the prime minister of Serbia and approved by his government and the national assembly of Serbia, does not reproduce the asterisk when it mentions Kosovo. This seems to suggest that the name issue will only crop up in a regional context.

General

Speech by Commissioner Füle: European Union strategy for the Arctic
Strasbourg, 17 April 2013. [Link](#)

Conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council meeting
Luxembourg, 22-23 April 2013. [Link](#)

Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton following the Foreign Affairs Council
Luxembourg, 22 April 2013. [Link](#)

Conclusions of the General Affairs Council meeting
Luxembourg, 22 April 2013. [Link](#)

Statement by Commissioner Štefan Füle following the General Affairs Council
Luxembourg, 22 April 2013. [Link](#)

MEPs: EEAS could do much better if institutions coordinated better
24 April 2013. [Link](#)

Eastern Partnership

Armenia

Statement by Commissioner Štefan Füle following his meeting with Foreign Minister of Armenia Edward Nalbandian
Brussels, 19 April 2013. [Link](#)

EU Commissioner Cecilia Malmström welcomes the signing of the EU-Armenia Readmission Agreement
Brussels, 19 April 2013. [Link](#)

EU-Armenia readmission agreement
Brussels, 19 April 2013. [Link](#)

Azerbaijan

Statement by Commissioner Štefan Füle following the meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Mahmoud Mammad-Guliyev
Brussels, 8 April 2013. [Link](#)

Belarus

Belarus: poll finds most want greater EU role on economy and trade
Brussels, 24 April 2013. [Link](#)

Georgia

Statement by Commissioner Štefan Füle following his meeting with Mr Konstantin Kublashvili, the Chairman of the Georgian Supreme Court
Brussels, 27 March 2013. [Link](#)

Statement by Commissioner Stefan Füle following his meeting with Foreign Minister of Georgia, Maia Panjikidze
Brussels, 24 April 2013. [Link](#)

Moldova

Most Moldovans believe EU brings peace and stability
Brussels, 24 April 2013. [Link](#)

Ukraine

Joint Statement by EU High Representative, Catherine Ashton, and Commissioner Štefan Füle on the review by Ukraine's Higher Specialized Court for Civil and Criminal Cases in the case of Yuriy Lutsenko
Brussels, 04 April 2013. [Link](#)

Joint Statement by EU High Representative, Catherine Ashton, and Commissioner Štefan Füle on the pardoning of Yuriy Lutsenko
Brussels, 7 April 2013. [Link](#)

Statement by Commissioner Štefan Füle following his meeting with Arseniy Yatsenyuk leader of the “United Opposition” in Ukraine
Brussels, 23 April 2013. [Link](#)

Statement by Commissioner Štefan Füle following his meeting with Andriy Klyuyev, Secretary of Ukraine’s National Security and Defence Council
Brussels, 24 April 2013. [Link](#)

Russia

Statement by the spokesperson of the High Representative Catherine Ashton on the administrative fines against “GOLOS”
Brussels, 28 April 2013. [Link](#)

Southern Neighbourhood

Parliamentary Assembly of Union for the Mediterranean to meet at EP in Brussels
11 April 2013. [Link](#)

Union for the Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly wants strong parliaments
12 April 2013. [Link](#)

Algeria

Algerians optimistic on EU ties and situation in their country
Brussels, 24 April 2013. [Link](#)

Egypt

High Representative Catherine Ashton visits Egypt
Brussels, 6 April 2013. [Link](#)

Statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton on the violent incidents at Coptic Cathedral in Cairo
Brussels, 7 April 2013. [Link](#)

Israel

Israel and EU share common values to drive cooperation, poll finds
Brussels, 24 April 2013. [Link](#)

Jordan

EU Election Observation Mission presents its Final Report and technical recommendations for future elections
Brussels, 27 March 2013. [Link](#)

Lebanon

EU allocates additional financial support for refugee crisis
Brussels, 23 April 2013. [Link](#)

Libya

Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the attack against the French embassy in Tripoli
Brussels, 23 April 2013. [Link](#)

Morocco

EU and Morocco start negotiations for closer trade ties
Brussels, 22 April 2013. [Link](#)

Palestine

The EU releases further assistance to support Palestinian people and refugees
Brussels, 27 March 2013. [Link](#)

The EU contributes €11.75 million to the Palestinian Authority's March salaries and pensions

Jerusalem, 4 April 2013. [Link](#)

Syria

Statement by the Spokesperson of High Representative Catherine Ashton following the discussions on Syria at the LAS summit in Qatar

Brussels, 28 March 2013. [Link](#)

Statement by the spokesperson of High Representative Catherine Ashton on the attack at Damascus University in Syria

Brussels, 30 March 2013. [Link](#)

Council eases sanctions against Syria to support opposition and civilians

Luxembourg, 22 April 2013. [Link](#)

Tunisia

Vast majority of Tunisians want greater EU role in their country

Brussels, 24 April 2013. [Link](#)

Enlargement

Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton at the end of the 8th round of the EU-facilitated dialogue

Brussels, 3 April 2013. [Link](#)

Presentation of the spring reports in the EP by Commissioner Füle

Strasbourg, 16 April 2013. [Link](#)

Press points by Commissioner Štefan Füle on the Spring Reports on the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, and Kosovo

Strasbourg, 16 April 2013. [Link](#)

Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton following another meeting in the framework of the EU-facilitated dialogue

Brussels, 17 April 2013. [Link](#)

Remarks by High Representative Catherine Ashton on the EU-facilitated dialogue

Brussels, 19 April 2013. [Link](#)

Commissioner Štefan Füle's reaction to the results of the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue, Brussels

Brussels, 19 April 2013. [Link](#)

Statement by President Barroso on the agreement in the EU-facilitated dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo

Brussels, 19 April 2013. [Link](#)

Statement by the President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy, on the occasion of the agreement within the facilitated dialogue on the normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo

Brussels, 19 April 2013. [Link](#)

European Parliament: Serbia and Kosovo: historic agreement paves the way for decisive progress in their EU perspectives

Brussels, 22 April 2013. [Link](#)

Albania

Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton at the end of her visit to Albania

Tirana, 16 April 2013. [Link](#)

Statement by Commissioner Štefan Füle following the 5th meeting of the EU-Albania Association and Stabilisation Council

Luxembourg, 23 April 2013. [Link](#)

Fifth meeting of the Stabilisation and Association Council between Albania and the EU: Joint Press Release

Luxembourg, 23 April 2013. [Link](#)

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Statement by Commissioner Štefan Füle on political consultations on implementation of the Sejdić-Finci judgement
Brussels, 11 April 2013. [Link](#)

Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton during her visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina
Sarajevo, 18 April 2013. [Link](#)

Croatia

Croatian accession on track, claims first report on administrative preparations,
Brussels, 27 March 2013. [Link](#)

Commissioner Füle: Address on the 2012 comprehensive monitoring report on Croatia
Strasbourg, 17 April 2013. [Link](#)

Council conclusions on Croatia
Luxembourg, 22 April 2013. [Link](#)

Iceland

Statement by Commissioner Štefan Füle following his meeting with Óssur Skarphéðinsson, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iceland
Brussels, 08 April 2013. [Link](#)

Kosovo

Remarks by Commissioner Füle on the European integration process of Kosovo,
Strasbourg, 17 April 2013. [Link](#)

Commission proposes an agreement to allow Kosovo to participate in EU programmes
Brussels, 22 April 2013. [Link](#)

Commission's Joint Report to the European Parliament and the Council on Kosovo
Brussels, 22 April 2013. [Link](#)

Macedonia

EU accession talks should start before the end of June, MEPs insist
09 April, 2013. [Link](#)

Š. Füle in Skopje for the High Level Accession Dialogue (HLAD)
Brussels, 9 April 2013. [Link](#)

Address by Commissioner Füle to the National Council on European Integration of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Skopje, 9 April 2013. [Link](#)

Reforms continue despite political tensions
Brussels, 16 April 2013. [Link](#)

Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton at the end of her visit to former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Skopje, 16 April 2013. [Link](#)

Montenegro

Statement by Commissioner Štefan Füle following his meeting with the leader of the Montenegrin Socialist People's Party, Mr. Srdjan Milić
Brussels, 27 March 2013. [Link](#)

First meeting of the Accession Conference with Montenegro at Deputy level
Brussels, 15 April 2013. [Link](#)

Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton following during her visit to Montenegro
Podgorica, 15 April 2013. [Link](#)

Speech by Štefan Füle: 2012 Progress report on Montenegro

Strasbourg, 17 April 2013. [Link](#)

Statement by Commissioner Štefan Füle following his meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Montenegro Igor Lukšić

Brussels, 24 April 2013. [Link](#)

Serbia

Statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton in response to reports of Serbian rejection of proposals from the EU-facilitated dialogue

Brussels, 8 April 2013. [Link](#)

Remarks by Commissioner Füle on the 2012 Progress report on Serbia

Strasbourg, 17 April 2013. [Link](#)

Commission's Joint Report to the European Parliament and the Council on Serbia

Brussels, 22 April 2013. [Link](#)

Turkey

Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton following her meeting with Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoğlu

Ankara, 03 April 2013. [Link](#)

Joint statement by Commissioners Štefan Füle and Cecilia Malmström on the adoption by the Turkish Parliament of the law on foreigners and international protection

Brussels, 05 April 2013. [Link](#)

EU-Turkey: With Ministers Bağış and Çelik about Social Policy and employment

Brussels, 10 April 2013. [Link](#)

Remarks by Commissioner Füle on the Progress report on Turkey

Strasbourg, 17 April 2013. [Link](#)

Index of European Neighbourhood Watch Editorials

Issue n. 92, April 2013

Enlargement Agenda - Special focus on Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo

Issue n. 91, March 2013

Tunisia in turmoil: how should the EU react

Issue n. 90, February 2013

Strengthening the strategic choice offered to the EU's southern Mediterranean neighbours

Issue n. 89, January 2013

The EU's External Action towards the Middle East: Resolution required

Issue n. 88, December 2012

Towards a Eurasian Economic Union: Integration and cooperation

Issue n. 87, November 2012

A Nobel Peace Prize to revive the EU enlargement process

Issue n. 86, October 2012

Free and fair? A challenge for the EU as Georgia and Ukraine gear up for elections

Issue n. 85, September 2012

The EEAS and the Eastern Partnership: Let the blame game stop

Issue n. 84, August 2012

Preparing for a post-Assad Syria: What role for the European Union?

Issue n. 83, June 2012

History does not move in straight lines

Issue n. 82, May 2012

Implications of the Eurozone crisis for EU foreign policy - costs and opportunities

Issue n. 81, April 2012

Do the BRICS make a Bloc?

Issue n. 80, March 2012

The Ukraine Question

Issue n. 79, February 2012

Some European comments Putin's foreign and security policy

Issue n. 78, January 2012

Putin's faltering return

Issue n. 77, December 2011

The Arab Spring – Is it a Revolution?

Issue n. 76, November 2011

The Responsibility to Protect and Regime Change

Issue n. 75, October 2011

East goes right, South goes left

Issue n. 74, August-September 2011

The political and legal logic for Palestinian statehood

Issue n. 73, July 2011

The Timoshenko case and the rule of law in Ukraine

Issue n. 72, June 2011

The Arab Regatta – a half year report card

Issue n. 71, May 2011

Review of the Review – of the European Neighbourhood Policy

Issue n. 70, April 2011

Bringing Democracy Support onto the Front-burner

Issue n. 69, March 2011

Interculturalism between the twin hazards of multiculturalism and assimilation

Issue n. 68, February 2011

Time for change: EU trade policy towards the Eastern Partners – The case of Georgia

Issue n. 67, January 2011

Dignity, Democracies and Dynasties

Issue n. 66, December 2010

Time for Justice in Kosovo

Issue n. 65, November 2010

Civil society in the Eastern Partnership

CEPS Neighbourhood Watch Editorial address

CENTRE FOR EUROPEAN POLICY STUDIES (CEPS)

Place du Congrès 1,
B-1000 Brussels, Belgium

website: www.ceps.eu

phone: +32 2 229 39 11

fax: +32 2 219 41 51

e-mail: hrant.kostanyan@ceps.eu *Subscribe!*

Editorial team: Steven Blockmans and Hrant Kostanyan