



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Sweden

3 March 2010

The Right Honourable Baroness Ashton
High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Vice President of the European Commission

Dear Catherine,

We are looking forward to seeing you at the Gymnich meeting this week and thank you and Miguel for putting the European External Action Service (EAS) on the agenda.

With negotiations ahead on the EAS Decision intensifying in Brussels, we think it a very good time to reflect in Cordoba on where we have got to, to check the direction in which we are heading and to remind ourselves why we want the EEAS to succeed and what we want it to do.

We remain firmly convinced that the post-Lisbon structures must enhance the EU's role as a global actor. There is an increasing demand for EU action in the world - a demand that is substantially bigger than the supply for the moment.

The European Council conclusions last December confirmed this strategic approach and proposed concentrating on the priorities of our neighbourhood, conflict-affected and crisis areas and our relations with key partners. We very much welcome the way you have included this approach in your vision for your time in office, as well as your offer to review policy in key areas.

The EAS is at the centre of ensuring that the EU's role is enhanced in this way.

We need the EAS to be as effective as possible on the world stage in the areas where it is mandated to act, cross-cutting enough to be a credible partner in the world, and flexible enough to be able to adapt quickly to changing geopolitical circumstances.

One of the most important elements of this is your ability to allocate the resources at the EU's disposal – people, funding and structures - in such a way that they match the strategic foreign policy interests and priorities flowing out of our joint deliberations. With the EAS, we have a unique opportunity to bring greater coherence to external activity.

Our relationship with the emerging powers and economies in our increasingly multipolar world is an example of this.

Although our relationship with the United States will remain the most important, we firmly believe that our ability to be part of shaping the world of tomorrow is critically dependent on our ability to deepen and broaden our relationship with these states and groupings over the coming years.

We must be honest when we debate this at Cordoba and admit we must do better. Our Summits do not always bring the concrete deliverables that they should and we do not yet approach the relationships strategically enough.

The EAS gives us a chance to change all this.

With your five-year term we have a first chance to look more than six months ahead, and we should start to do this in Cordoba.

For example, when we debate the big and emerging powers we might justifiably decide we need larger and more political EU Delegations in key capitals like New Delhi, Islamabad, Beijing, Brasilia or Jakarta; more cross-cutting EEAS units in Brussels dealing with key issues; or programme funds directed more closely at the crisis and conflict-affected areas of the world that are important to both us and our strategic partners.

But this will only work if the European Commission, the Member States and the Council Secretariat are able to work together coherently.

For that reason, we are concerned about some of the inter-institutional struggles evident in our current negotiations on the EAS package. You should know that you have our solid support in your aim of achieving the balance of Member State, Commission and Council influence on the EAS that the Treaty foresees.

The papers you presented to Coreper last week go a long way in this direction, and we support your aim of ensuring outstanding issues are resolved in a way that can deliver the real step-change in our external effect that we all want.

We must be ambitious with the EAS, and we therefore suggest some principles, based on the key factors of the resources at the EU's disposal – people, funding, structures – that we might discuss and affirm at Cordoba as an aid to the continuing negotiations in Brussels:

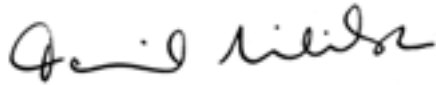
- **On people:** the EAS needs the mixture of experience provided by all three of Member States, Commission and Council Secretariat. If any one of those elements is more absent than the others, the EAS will be less effective because the internal balance will be wrong. There must be a concerted effort to bring temporary agents at all levels, including delegations, into the EAS at the beginning. We will not achieve a step-change in the way we think without also changing some of the thinkers;
- The EAS needs the brightest and best from wherever they come, and we should ensure it has them. It is right that the recruitment of staff to the EAS should be transparent and based on merit, and it is welcome that you intend to bring forward proposals on this as soon as possible. The procedures will need to reflect the new demands of the EAS, and the new skills and competences it will require;

- A mixture of new and existing jobs should be open to applications (from any of the three categories of staff) from the outset. This implies that some existing jobs transfer as “open” slots. We are concerned with the fact that both the Council Secretariat and Commission continue to fill such appointments in the interim period, or that in some cases they are being moved outside of the future scope of the EAS altogether; this is not the way it should be.
- **On funding:** there are some operational budgets (the CFSP budget and Stability Instrument) that it is vital the EAS is able to implement itself, in order to improve the EU’s ability to manage crisis management operations and play a broader role in the EAS’s core work of conflict prevention and stabilisation;
- On programming, we strongly support the advantages of a horizontal approach, which gives the EAS a strategic role in all three of the major assistance budgets (EDF, DCI, ENPI), and we support as a compromise the model we believe has broadly been endorsed by Coreper of the EAS leading on stages 1-2 of the cycle;
- **On structures:** you certainly need the flexibility to be able to perform your role of supervising and co-ordinating CFSP activity and coordinating the Union’s external action. That means allowing you to create and manage the units and Directorates under you;
- The EAS should also be properly staffed to support the Commission in its implementation of the external aspects of broader Union policies (e.g. climate change, migration, energy security). It is right that this should not duplicate work elsewhere in the Commission, but broader foreign policy trends should be taken into account by policy makers leading on the subjects;
- It is very important that you can take the lead in the overall management of the network of delegations. The EAS will certainly need an intimate relationship with its principal stakeholders in the rest of the Commission, but it must have the keys to its own house.

Ultimately, many of these are questions about inter-institutional culture as much as on-the-ground structures. So above all we need to work towards a new culture of co-operation and mutual reinforcement both within and towards the EAS, one in which there is transparency of decision-making, the Member States play a full part right from the beginning and we put aside the inter-institutional rivalries of the past.

That is the vision which the drafters of the Lisbon Treaty foresaw. We know it is a vision that you share, and it is the only way to make the EU a true and coherent global actor.

We acknowledge that the inter-institutional rivalries are well-engrained. A new culture may end up being the hardest aspect of the EAS to develop. But through open and transparent working, proper and systematic consultation, and a focus on our strategic five-year goals we can and must get there.



DAVID MILIBAND



CARL BILDT