



A u-turn on the European External Action Service? Where is Development?

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The new [European External Action Service \(EEAS\)](#) is slowly coming alive. The recruitment process is in full swing, with the [appointment of 28 ambassadors](#) charged with representing the European Union's interest abroad. Twelve of them were selected from the [Member States](#), and sixteen from the [Commission](#).

The next step is the selection of the senior managerial team, however, the [European Parliament](#) is yet to approve the staff and financial legal base for the service which would allow the service to become fully operational. The EU's High Representative for Foreign Policy, [Catherine Ashton](#), would like the EEAS to be launched in December, marking the first anniversary of the entry into force of the [Lisbon Treaty](#). The Parliament, however, refuses to be held down by the deadline.

In the meantime, the organogram for the service is in circulation (albeit not publicly available). It shows an EEAS split into five geographic departments and one thematic department – 'Multilateral Thematic' – which focuses on human rights, democratisation, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, gender and then 'multilateral' (i.e. the [United Nations](#), the [Council of Europe](#) and the [Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe](#)). At the head of each department is an 'MD' (presumably, Managing Director?). Above the MDs sit two Deputy Secretary Generals, who report to both a Chief Operating Officer

and an Executive Secretary General, who in turn report to the High Representative. Alongside all that is an administrative department, a coordination department for civilian and military crisis response and peacekeeping operations, a strategy team, a legal advisor, the EU's Special Representatives and the Peace and Security Committee Chair.

Interestingly, this complex spider web has a strap line: 'A service for conflict prevention, security and stability'. This is a far cry from the revolutionary *sui generis* coordinating body of all EU external action it was heralded to be. The strap line did not make it past the Committee of Permanent Representatives in Brussels, however it gives an idea of the nature of the beast. Aside from the above strap line, 'consistency in external action' (the stated mission of the EEAS) will be hard to achieve with six separate departments, although inevitably it will come down to both structure and personality. Responsibility for the group of [African, Caribbean and Pacific \(ACP\)](#) countries has been split up. A sign of things to come, perhaps?

Development cooperation is conspicuously absent! This, in spite of the fact that the [EEAS has been given responsibility for development programming](#) – including allocating resources based on a poverty assessment, absorption capacity and commitment to political reform, developing strategic country assessments and the intended response, and identifying priority

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sectors and themes for the country including multi-year financial envelopes. One can only assume that the development responsibilities will be taken care of by the different geographic departments in the EEAS. However, where will the development expertise and oversight come from? Where will the development leadership come from within the EEAS? The short answer is: it won't. Instead, it looks like things have slipped back to 'the Commission should do development and the EEAS should do peace and security'. What happened to aspirations of the EEAS bringing greater political and policy coherence and effectiveness to EU external action?

Senior officials in the Commission consistently refer to the EEAS as a real step forward for external policy in general and development policy in particular. In a recent [ODI blog](#) I concluded 'On paper, international development occupies a place at the forefront of the EU's external policy and some safeguards have been put in place to protect its poverty focus'. The latest organogram for the EEAS tells a different story.

The views presented in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of ODI.