

THE EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE: THE DREAM OF A COMMON EUROPEAN DIPLOMACY CAME TRUE?

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Abstract

On December 1st 2010 the European External Action Service (EEAS) came into being – the potential “unique voice” of the EU on the world stage. The creation of a body as complex as the EEAS, which was meant to re-organize the EU’s entire foreign policy machinery was a lengthy process of difficult negotiations between the institutional stake-holders. As the EU’s post-Lisbon institutional setting was unfolding, an ever more powerful Parliament, a Commission jealously guarding its prerogatives, a Council representing 27 different national interests and an ambitious High Representative fought some fierce turf wars before agreeing on the format of the EEAS. Three years later, the results are mixed.

This paper aims to provide a detailed account of the process of agreeing on the EEAS project in 2010 and an analysis of the perspectives for consolidating the EEAS three years after it was established. At the same time, in spite of the battle within the EU institutional framework reformed by the Lisbon Treaty, which might indicate little room for manoeuvre for the EEAS, this new body holds the potential for supporting the development of a genuine common European diplomacy.

Keywords: European Union, European Council, EEAS, intergovernmentalism, Lisbon Treaty, Catherine Ashton

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