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**Task Force on ‘EEAS 2.0’**

At a time when the EU needs to act as a united international player in order not to become a pawn in the hands of major powers, member states are struggling to muster the political will to set aside their disagreements and focus on the common interest. A crisis-decade and two HRVPs on from the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the European External Action Service (EEAS) still suffers from a lack of buy-in and follow-up by the member states and other parts of the EU administration.

The tenth anniversary of the adoption of *Council Decision 2010/427/EU establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service* and the creation of the EEAS in January 2011 provide an opportune moment to take stock of the role which the Service has played in forging a more coherent, visible and effective EU foreign policy.

Building on a fruitful research cooperation between SIEPS and CEPS in 2012-13, which led to the publication of a well-received and widely distributed [legal commentary](https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/eeas-20-legal-commentary-council-decision-2010427eu-establishing-organisation-and/) on Council Decision 2010/427/EU and a set of [recommendations](https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/eeas-20-recommendations-amendment-council-decision-2010427eu-european-external-action/) to amend it, the institutes have now joined forces with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) to investigate how the role and functioning of the EEAS can be improved to better serve the common interests of the European Union.

A high-level group of (former) diplomats, officials of EU institutions and member states, as well as NGO representatives, academics and think tankers will participate in an independent review of the Service with the aim of formulating ideas to strengthen the value added that the EEAS can offer.

**AT A GLANCE**

**Goals**: To develop and disseminate policy recommendations to strengthen the role and functioning of the EEAS

**Format**: An expert group composed of (former) politicians, diplomats, officials and opinion-makers

**Support**: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and SIEPS

**Governance**: CEPS and SIEPS manage the Task Force, propose the agenda for its meetings, ensure timely delivery of discussion papers, draw up the analytical report, distil policy recommendations, ensure quality control by organising peer review by the Task Force, and organise communication and dissemination

**Duration**: May 2020 – June 2021

**Meetings**: 3x half-day meetings:

* 01 July, 14:00-18:00 (online)
* 03 September, 14:00-18:00 at the premises of CEPS
* 19-20 or 26-27 October (tbd)

**Publication**: November 2020

**Outreach**: November 2020 – June 2021

Presentations in Brussels, Berlin, Stockholm, Paris, …

**Outputs:** 1 report, OpEds in key languages, press release, dissemination events

**COMPOSITION OF THE TASK FORCE**

**Chairman**: ***Pierre Vimont***, Ambassadeur de France, Senior Associate Researcher at Carnegie Europe, first Executive Secretary General of the EEAS

**Rapporteurs**: ***Christophe Hillion***, Senior Researcher at SIEPS and Professor of European Law at the universities of Oslo and Leiden

***Steven Blockmans***, Director *a.i.* of CEPS and Professor of EU External Relations Law and Governance at the University of Amsterdam

**Members: *Gerhard Conrad***, Visiting Professor, King’s College London, former Director of EU INTCEN, member of BND, UN mediator in the Middle East

***Janos Herman***, former EUSR for Central Asia, HoD in Georgia, Norway & Iceland, PermRep of Hungary to NATO, Permanent Secretary of the MFA

***Renée Jones-Bos***, former Secretary General of the MFA and Ambassador of the Netherlands to the United States and Russia

***Nicole Koenig***, Deputy Director of the Jacques Delors Centre, Berlin

***Christian Leffler***, former Deputy Secretary General for Global and Economic Issues, and Managing Director for the Americas, EEAS

***Lotte Leicht***, Director of the Brussels Office of Human Rights Watch

***Christian Lequesne***, Professor of European Politics at Sciences Po and Professor at the College of Europe

***James Moran***, Senior Associate Fellow at CEPS, former Principal Advisor for the MENA and Asia Director at the EEAS, HoD in Egypt, Jordan & Yemen

***David O’Sullivan***, Chairman of EPC governing board, former HoD to the US, EEAS Chief Operating Officer, SG and DG Trade of the Commission

***Elena Poptodorova***, Vice President of the Atlantic Treaty Association and the Atlantic Club of Bulgaria; twice Ambassador of Bulgaria to the US

***Kristi Raik***, Director of the Estonian Foreign Policy Institute

***Annika Söder***, President of the Board of Governors of EIP, former State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Assistant DG of the FAO

***Renate Tenbusch***, Director of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung’s EU Office, Brussels

***Nathalie Tocci***, Director of the Istituto Affari Internazionali and Special Adviser to EU HRVP Josep Borrell

***Vygaudas Ušackas***, former EU HoD in Russia, EUSR for Afghanistan, Lithuanian Amb. to the US, Mexico, UK, Chief Negotiator for EU accession

***Beata Wojna***, Lecturer at Tecnológico de Monterrey, former Ambassador of Poland to Mexico (accred. Central America) , former Deputy Director of PISM

***Catherine Woollard***, Secretary General, European Council on Refugees and Exiles

**Observers:** Incumbents of the EU institutions, EEAS, MFAs and partners of the Task Force will be invited to act as observers.

**TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED**

The Task Force does not aim to replicate policy review processes started since the 2016 EU Global Strategy. It is rather geared towards addressing existing frustrations in the way EU diplomacy is ‘done’. As such, the Task Force will zoom in on the institutional frameworks, practical procedures and mundane interfaces that European diplomats use to forge a ‘common’ foreign and security policy of the EU. The underlying assumption for this approach is that instruments can shape results.

In line with the pathology drawn up during an inaugural ‘stock-taking’ meeting between the Chairman and the rapporteurs, the Task Force will organise its work around three thematic clusters: tasks, trust, and resources.

1. **(Prioritizing) tasks**

The tasks of the EEAS and their prioritisation will be discussed against the backdrop of expectations as envisaged in the EEAS mandate, and considering traditional diplomatic actors’ functions, keeping in mind the particularity of the “Service”. Concretely, the first discussion paper will look at the role of the EEAS in:

*Policy coherence:*

* + - * Internal coordination? Theory and practice of support for and coordination between institutions to achieve an integrated approach to EU external action
      * Preparation of decision-making: significance of chairing Foreign Affairs Council
      * Coordination and cooperation with the President of European Council
      * Coordination with Commission: raising resources to match/generate political will?
      * Coordinator of national positions?

*Policy initiative /- shaping:*

* + - * The EEAS as a “factory of ideas” providing added value compared to Member States and European Commission?
      * Cross-cutting themes: climate diplomacy; digital diplomacy; health diplomacy; …
      * Support and promotion of multilateralism
      * Facilitation of dialogues, mediation, etc.
      * Effectiveness of the HR right of initiative

*Representation* *of the EU:*

* + - * Role of EU delegations?
      * Diplomatic (and consular), political, economic, development, …
      * Preparation, execution and follow-up of international conferences
      * …

1. **Trust**

Achieving the tasks that the EEAS is expected to fulfil hinges on simultaneous support and cooperation from other protagonists, particularly the Member States (as such, and through the (European) Council), the Commission, as well as partners. This discussion will explore ways to secure and improve trust in the EEAS.

*Member States:*

* + - Formal and informal tools to secure sincere cooperation?
    - Quality of reporting and initiatives
    - Access to, and processing of information (conditions for intelligence gathering/sharing & data management)
    - *Esprit de corps*: towards a complementary European diplomatic culture
    - …

*Institutions* (Commission and (European) Council):

* Clearer distribution of tasks?
* Means to improve cooperation and collaboration?
* …

*Partners*

* Perceptions of (and cooperation from) third countries, international organisations
* Interactions with civil society, business, …

1. **Resources**

Having considered the EEAS tasks and their prioritisation, and support thereto from other protagonists, the TF will discuss available and desirable means, focusing on:

* + - Internal organisation to match external / internal expectations
    - Reconciling different procedural frameworks
    - Interactions between EU delegations - Headquarters
    - Budgetary considerations
    - Attracting the best and the brightest
    - Training
    - …

**PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR THE TASK FORCE**

The Task Force process is one of structured dialogue among experts, (former) politicians, diplomats, policy-makers, representatives from industry, NGOs, academia and/or think tanks who are brought together for several meetings. Task Force reports are the final output of the research carried out independently by SIEPS and CEPS in the context of the Task Force.

Participants in a Task Force

* The Chair is an expert who steers the dialogue during the meetings and advises SIEPS and CEPS as to the general conduct of the activities of the Task Force.
* Members provide input as independent experts.
* Rapporteurs are SIEPS and CEPS researchers who organise the Task Force, conduct the research independently and draft the final report.
* Observers are any policy-makers or stakeholders who are invited to attend the Task Force meetings and provide oral and/or written input.

Objectives of a Task Force report

* Task Force reports are meant to contribute to policy debates by presenting a balanced set of arguments, based on available data, literature and views.
* Reports seek to provide readers with a constructive basis for discussion. They do not seek to advance a single position or misrepresent the complexity of any subject matter.
* Task Force reports also fulfil an educational purpose and are drafted in a manner that is easy to understand, without jargon, and with any technical terminology fully defined.

Drafting of the report

* Task Force reports reflect members’ views.
* For any element or recommendation to be featured in the report, there needs to be consensus or broad agreement among Task Force members.
* Where consensus on a recommendation coexists with a significant minority view, the report will feature this minority view next to the relevant recommendation.
* Task Force reports feature data that are considered both relevant and accurate by the rapporteurs. After consultation with other Task Force members, the rapporteurs may decide either to exclude data or to mention these concerns in the main body of the text.