



## European Think Tanks Group Policy Brief June 2010

### Development-proofing the European External Action Service

On 26 April 2010, the General Affairs Council agreed a framework for the European External Action Service (EEAS) which makes reference to international development, in particular the focus on poverty reduction enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty. The framework gives the new EU diplomatic service a role in shaping strategy and in programming development cooperation for all regions of the world. It also grants a supervisory and oversight role to the Development Commissioner.

The framework provides development with clear opportunities to contribute to building a more consistent EU external action, that is guided by the values and objectives expressed in the Treaty. Development with the aim of poverty reduction is one of these objectives alongside democracy, the rule of law, human rights, conflict prevention, global trade integration, environmental protection, disaster management and multilateral cooperation. In fact, development is about **all** of these objectives. Hence development-proofing the EEAS is about ensuring that all the objectives specified in Article 21 shapes the work of the EEAS. Thus, a value-driven EEAS would respect these objectives in all its roles - not merely when taking key decisions on Community assistance designated primarily for the reduction of poverty. Also, when assisting the High Representative in ensuring consistency between the different areas of its external action and between these and specifically development-focused policies, a value-driven EEAS would go beyond coordination of actors, towards creating new synergies and promoting Policy Coherence for Development. Finally, in implementing the Common Foreign and Security Policy, it would make efforts to take on board lessons and integrate approaches from respective EU policy areas including development cooperation.

This short briefing note takes the blueprint on the EEAS agreed by the General Affairs Council as a starting point, builds on the four key priorities set out in the [European Think Tanks Group Open Letter of 5 May 2010](#) and offers a set of proposals that address some of the 'how' questions in the implementation phase. In implementing the agreement reached, speed is now of the essence. A crowded timetable of international processes lies ahead, including the G8 and G20, the UN Summit on the Millennium Development Goals, and the Cancun meeting on climate change. There are four key points:

1. Equip the EEAS to support the High Representative and the Development Commissioner in promoting the coherence of all EU policies with development objectives;
2. Ensure development principles inform the programming of aid;
3. Enable the EEAS to facilitate EU donor coordination;
4. Ensure both the EEAS and DG Development have the necessary capacity and expertise for strategic thinking on development issues.

## 1. Equip the EEAS to support the High Representative and the Development Commissioner in promoting coherence of all EU policies with development objectives

The High Representative has a role to play in delivering coherent and joined-up policy, respecting development objectives. The Development Commissioner needs to be given the space and authority to work with the EEAS to promote policy coherence for development and to stop initiatives which do not conform to development principles.

- Both the High Representative and the Development Commissioner need to be held accountable for Policy Coherence for Development by the European Parliament engaging both the foreign affairs and development committees, along with others dealing with trade, environment and other items;
- A PCD focal point could be established within the EEAS to monitor and report on progress on PCD in CFSP and the allocation and programming process under EEAS responsibility in close collaboration with DG Development. The focal point could support the High Representative and the Development Commissioner in promoting PCD in the college of Commissioners. PCD focal points could also be established in EU Delegations in order to relay systematic feedback from partner countries<sup>1</sup> and reporting on PCD could be made a responsibility of the EU Head of Delegation.<sup>2</sup> All PCD focal points should receive adequate training and institutional backing and report directly to the Head of Delegation;
- Ex-ante impact assessments for new policy proposals should provide better information on potential impact in developing countries, as required by the 2009 EC Guidelines, to inform EEAS and Commission policy-making;
- The process of inter-service consultations needs to be more effective in promoting the coherence of all EU policies with development objectives;
- Openness and transparency on policy coherence is key. Continuous dialogue should be fostered with the European Parliament, developing countries, civil society organisations in and outside Europe, as well as key think tanks and universities specialising in global development.

## 2. Ensure development principles inform the programming of aid

Aid programming must be led by long-term development goals rather than short-term foreign policy interests.

- DG Development and EuropeAid should be brought together in a single Directorate-General to strengthen the development voice in the Commission, to reinforce the link between policy and implementation, and to avoid duplication of roles and functions.
- A direct line of accountability should be preserved to EuropeAid from Delegation staff when involved in management of development funds and political dialogue linked to development cooperation;<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Currently, EC Delegations play a role in 'monitoring PCD' at the country level through compiling a chapter on PCD in the Country Strategy Paper. This is both ineffective and inefficient. Staff are not trained and not supported by headquarters, and the channel through which any relevant information should inform other EU policies is unclear.

<sup>2</sup> On top of the role played by the EEAS in the field, the EU Ombudsman Office could use its own powers of initiative to deal with complaints on the impacts of EU policies in developing countries by non-EU citizens. See MoU signed between the Ombudsman and the EIB that particularly mentions that the Ombudsman will use its own initiative power if the complainant is a non-EU citizen: [http://www.eib.europa.eu/attachments/strategies/complaints\\_mou\\_eo\\_eib\\_en.pdf](http://www.eib.europa.eu/attachments/strategies/complaints_mou_eo_eib_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> This proposal aims to address the concerns raised by the Court of Auditors with regard to preserving and enhancing accountability, responsibility, and quality of financial management at Delegation level (Court of Auditors of the European

- Consider putting in place ‘dual key’ solutions to ensure the coherence of political relations and development cooperation through close cooperation between EEAS and Commission staff at all stages of the programming cycle, for example co-decision between the Ambassador and the Head of Operations on executing the budget and managing programmes;
- Consider giving the EEAS a strong mandate to lead a participative review process of the external action instruments under the new EU multi-annual financial framework, ensuring consistency in external action and allowing best practices and lessons learned from each geographic instrument to inform future modalities;
- Strengthen the Inter-Service Quality Support Group to make sure it is equipped with adequate capacity and authority to monitor the application of country ownership and other development principles during all steps of the programming process;
- Create an independent evaluation unit with a mandate and resources to cover all aspects of EU external action.

### 3. **Enable the EEAS to facilitate EU donor coordination and division of labour**

According to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, a key principle of development cooperation is that the partner country is in the lead in donor coordination. The Lisbon Treaty strengthens the coordination and complementarity requirement in EU development cooperation and gives the Commission a role in facilitating it.<sup>4</sup> Given that EU Delegations will come under the authority of the EEAS, the Commission’s coordinating role and responsibility will need to be extended to the EEAS.

- Respecting the partner country’s lead in donor coordination as well as ownership, the EEAS could facilitate EU donor coordination at field level and encourage joint EU country strategies, joint EU programmes and projects and joint monitoring and evaluation, provided EU Member States give the EEAS the space to do so;
- EU Delegations could report on progress and set-backs in donor coordination and division of labour in-country as well as on the EU’s own investments in promoting EU coordination and division of labour.

### 4. **Ensure both the EEAS and the Commission have the necessary capacity and expertise for strategic thinking on international relations in line with the objectives of EU external action**

As the EEAS will have significant responsibilities both in conducting political dialogue with developing countries and regions and in allocating and programming development funds, the EEAS needs some expertise on all areas of EU external action to be able to function as a competent interface with the Commission services.

- A senior-level post responsible for development supported by his or her own strategic policy staff should be created to ensure that the Commission’s thematic expertise on

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Union. Opinion No 4/2010 (pursuant to Article 322, TFEU) on a proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities, as regards the European External Action Service:

<http://eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/4116734.PDF>

<sup>4</sup> Article 208 (TEF): “...The Union’s development cooperation policy and that of the Member States complement and reinforce each other.” Article 210 (TEF): “1. In order to promote the complementarity and efficiency of their action, the Union and the Member States shall coordinate their policies on development cooperation and shall consult each other on their aid programmes, including in international organisations and during international conferences. They may undertake joint action. Member States shall contribute if necessary to the implementation of Union aid programmes.”

development issues and insights from cooperation in-country inform not only the programming of financial instruments but also CFSP in developing countries. In order to beef up the capacity of the Commission and the EEAS, the Member States should consider seconding national development experts to the EU;

- A human resource system that allows for a parallel but separate career-path for technical development advisors in the EEAS and relevant Commission Services should be considered in the medium term;
- All EEAS staff working on topics affecting developing countries, both at headquarters and in the delegations, should receive development training.



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