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The position and role of the High Representative of the Union for  
Foreign Affairs and Security Policy – selected issues

**Abstract**

The subject of this article is the post of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR), introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon. The author discusses about the position and role of the HR, paying attention to the potential conflicts associated with his competences. The last part of this article is about the role of HR as a representative of the European Union on the international stage. It will be presented Catherine Ashton's activity in this area, as a HR.

**Keywords:** High Representative, European Union external relations, Common Foreign and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, Treaty of Lisbon

## Introduction

The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (the High Representative, HR) created by the Treaty of Lisbon<sup>1</sup> is a body of the European Union (EU) responsible for carrying out the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and European Security and Defence Policy. The responsibilities of the HR were previously held by two separate posts of the European Union: the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Commissioner for External Relations. The Treaty of Lisbon puts all of the powers related to common foreign and security and defence policy into one person's hands. The aim was to improve the coherence, effectiveness and visibility of the EU's external action<sup>2</sup>. This holistic approach cannot be efficiently implemented without changes in the EU's machinery and its institutional structures. Personal connection of the High Representative with the Commissioner for External Relations and the European External Action Service (EEAS) made by the Treaty of Lisbon would allow the integration of the security, political, social and

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<sup>1</sup> Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, OJ C 306, 17.12.2007.

<sup>2</sup>

[http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/institutional\\_affairs/treaties/lisbon\\_treaty/ai0009\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/institutional_affairs/treaties/lisbon_treaty/ai0009_en.htm) (accessed November 15, 2013). See also: <http://www.eeas.europa.eu/ashton> (accessed November 15, 2013); *EU External Relations Law and Policy in the Post-Lisbon Era*, ed. Paul James Cardwell, The Hague: T.M.C. Asser Press, 2012, p. 6; Beata Przybylska-Maszner, *Spory kompetencyjne wokół urzędu Wysokiego Przedstawiciela Unii Europejskiej do Spraw Zagranicznych i Polityki Bezpieczeństwa*, „Studia Europejskie“, no. 2, 2012, p. 33.

economic dimensions in all foreign policies, from their creation to the implementation and evaluation<sup>3</sup>.

The post discussed in this article was introduced by the Treaty of Amsterdam as the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy and was occupied by Javier Solana for ten years. It was much more limited in scope than the present one created by the Treaty of Lisbon<sup>4</sup>. There is no doubt that the High Representative with a stronger mandate would increase the EU's diplomatic capacity and strengthen the leadership in the EU's foreign policy. Although the new powers attributed by the Lisbon Treaty to the HR have enhanced the chances of this institution to contributing to this vision, the appointment of Catherine Ashton from the United Kingdom seems to leave space for and the burden of developing this vision in the hands of national leaders. During the first months in office, Ashton has been criticized for failing to boost EU visibility on the world stage on major policy dossiers and for missing key meetings with national ministries. However, political commentators have recognized her strong determination in establishing the EEAS. Thus, whether really she can be regarded as a "name and face" on European Union policy abroad?

### **Competences and responsibilities of the High Representative**

According to the article 18 paragraph 1 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), the High Representative is appointed for a five-

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<sup>3</sup> Sven Biscop, Jolyon Howorth, Bastian Giegerich, *Europe: a Time for Strategy*, „Egmont Paper“, no. 27, 2009, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> See: *The Foreign Policy of the European Union. Assessing Europe's Role in the World*, ed. Federiga Bindi, Washington: Brookings Institution Press Washington, D.C., 2010, p. 34-35; Beata Przybylska-Maszner, *Spory kompetencyjne...*, p. 37-40.

year term by the European Council which elects him by a qualified majority voting with an agreement of the President of the European Commission. His choice must be approved by the European Parliament. Term of office of this posts may be terminated in the same way. In accordance with the Article 5 of the Protocol on Transitional Provisions<sup>5</sup> annexed to the Treaty of Lisbon, the term of office of the High Representative is linked to the term of the European Commission.

Following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon the European Council has appointed Catherine Ashton as the High Representative. Ashton largely unknown to the general public even in the United Kingdom had been previously the European Commissioner for Trade and otherwise had no foreign affairs experience<sup>6</sup>. She was also criticized because of the lack of charisma, experience in diplomacy<sup>7</sup>, language skills and no command of other foreign languages but only English<sup>8</sup>. Even so, Ashton unexpectedly came to the top of the list of the candidates for the HR when she was nominated unanimously

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<sup>5</sup> Protocol on Transitional Provisions, OJ C 306, 17.12.2007, p. 159.

<sup>6</sup> Her appointment to this position was a big surprise, because in the political couloirs and European writings appeared the names of people known from previous political achievements, such as Joschka Fischer or Tony Blair. About controversies related to the appointment Ashton for the position of HR see: Beata Przybylska-Maszner, *Spory kompetencyjne...*, p. 40-44.

<sup>7</sup> Before being appointed to the post of HR, Ashton was EU Commissioner for Trade (for one year) and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in the UK Department for Education and Skills. Unlike Javier Solana, she has little experience in foreign policy and virtually no personal contacts with world's leaders.

<sup>8</sup> The Telegraph wrote that her appointment was "the most ridiculous appointment in the history of the European Union". See: Johannes Langer, Ashton, *From Zero to Hero*, <http://johanneslanger.com/2013/12/07/ashton-from-zero-to-hero> (accessed November 15, 2013).

by the centre-left leaders who claimed the post<sup>9</sup>. Thus, her appointment can be understood as the unwillingness of the Member States to underpin the strengthened position of the HR by a strong personality.

With respect to the competencies of the HR, as mentioned above, his main role is to conduct the foreign policy of the EU<sup>10</sup>. He combine the previous posts of the High Representative for CFSP and the Commissioner for External Relations. This “double hat” and “double role” of the High Representative “in some way mirrors the unity of the supranational (Commission) and the intergovernmental (Council) logic of the Union, it combines in one person the European and the Member States’ lines of interest”<sup>11</sup>.

Drawing on his role as Vice-President of the European Commission, the High Representative ensures the consistency and coordination of the European Union’s external action. He also chairs the Foreign Affairs Council and conducts the Common Foreign and Security Policy. Then, with the support of the European External Action Service, he is responsible for managing, implementing, and representing CFSP decisions. The HR participates actively in the common foreign and

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<sup>9</sup> Andrew Rettman, *Little-known British peer emerges as top candidate for EU foreign minister*, EUobserver, <http://euobserver.com/institutional/29022> (accessed November 15, 2013); Honor Mahony, *EU chooses unknowns for new top jobs*, EUobserver, <http://euobserver.com/political/29024> (accessed November 15, 2013).

<sup>10</sup> See: Iwona Miedzińska, *Wysoki Przedstawiciel Unii do spraw Zagranicznych i Polityki Bezpieczeństwa*, in: *Teoretyczno-metodologiczny wymiar badań nad instytucjami Unii Europejskiej*, ed. Konstanty Adam Wojtaszczyk, Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza ASPRA-JR, 2013, p. 242-243, 254-259.

<sup>11</sup> Ingolf Pernice, *The Treaty of Lisbon: Multilevel Constitutionalism in Action*, „Columbia Journal of European Law“, vol. 15 (3), 2009, p. 399.



security and defence policy<sup>12</sup>. First of all, he contributes to the development of that policy by submitting proposals to the Council and the European Council<sup>13</sup>. Then (as a representative of the Council) he implements the decisions which has been adopted by the European Council and the Council<sup>14</sup>. Secondly, he also has a duty to represent the EU in the international relations. He conducts the political dialogue with third countries and is responsible for expressing the EU's positions, representing the EU in the international organisations (such as the United Nations) and at international conferences<sup>15</sup>.

Replacing the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Commissioner for External Relations, the HR has also shared their respective responsibilities<sup>16</sup>:

within the Council he is responsible for ensuring the consistency and continuity in executing the tasks related to the EU foreign policy. For this reason he chairs the Foreign Affairs Council and building consensus between the 28 Member States and their national priorities, often through monthly meetings of EU foreign ministers;

within the Commission he holds the responsibilities for external relations. Otherwise, he is responsible for ensuring coordination

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<sup>12</sup> However, in September 2012, the Daily Telegraph criticised her European Commission attendance record reporting that Baroness Ashton had been completely absent at 21 out of 32 weekly meetings held so far that year.

<sup>13</sup> Article 18 of the TEU.

<sup>14</sup> Article 27 paragraph 1 of the TEU.

<sup>15</sup> Article 27 paragraph 2 of the TEU.

<sup>16</sup>

[http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/institutional\\_affairs/treaties/lisbon\\_treaty/ai0009\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/institutional_affairs/treaties/lisbon_treaty/ai0009_en.htm) (accessed November 15, 2013).

between the external policy and the other Commission's policies in relation to different EU's services and institutions.

The High Representative regularly has to consult the European Parliament on the main issues related to the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy. He also has to inform the European Parliament about the advancement of these policies. His duties include taking account of the Parliament's opinions. In the matter of conducting peace-keeping missions, conflict prevention and strengthening international security the HR ensures coordination of the civilian and military aspects. According to the article 30 paragraph 2 of the TEU, in cases requiring a rapid decision he has the right to convene (within 48 hours) an extraordinary meeting of the Council as his own initiative or at the request of a Member State. With a very urgent need it may occur faster. Together with the Council, he shall ensure respect for the principles of loyalty and mutual solidarity with the EU Member States in the field of the external relations<sup>17</sup>.

However, the High Representative of the Union does not have the monopoly on the EU's external representation. The Treaty of Lisbon also gives the responsibility for the representation of the EU beyond to the President of the European Council but at a separate level and without prejudice to the powers of the High Representative. However, the text does not specify how the work is to be divided between the two allowing practical experience to determine their respective roles. While there has been some criticism of the vague division of powers between the EU's top players, Ukrainian ambassador to the EU Andriy Veselovsky praised the framework and clarified it in his own terms: "The President of the European Commission speaks as the EU's

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<sup>17</sup> Article 12 paragraph 3 of the TEU.

government while the President of the European Council is a strategist'. The High Representative specialises in bilateral relations while the European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy deals in technical matters such as the free trade agreement with Ukraine. The President of the European Parliament meanwhile articulates the EU's values"<sup>18</sup>.

Potential conflicts could occur between the High Representative, the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission, because the provisions of Treaty of Lisbon are ambiguous with respect to the delimitation of their responsibilities. Institutional tensions could be expected firstly between the coordinating function of the High Representative and Members of the Commission with responsibilities for external policies, and secondly, between the HR and the President of the European Council, which may concern the particular function of the EU's external representation<sup>19</sup>. Despite possible conflicts, the Treaty of Lisbon provides a strong institutional basis for a more effective European foreign policy, among others through the creation of the EEAS.

According to the article 27 paragraph 2 of the TEU, the High Representative is assisted in the performance of his duties by the European External Action Service, which cooperates with the diplomatic

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<sup>18</sup> Andrew Rettman, *Ukraine gives positive appraisal of new-model EU*, EUobserver, <http://euobserver.com/institutional/29680> (accessed November 15, 2013).

<sup>19</sup> For example these institutional conflicts could occur during the civilian and military crisis management missions, in which the EU is engaged all over the world. See: Julia Schmidt, *The High Representative, the President and the Commission—Competing Players in the EU's External Relations: The Case of Crisis Management*, in: *EU External Relations Law and Policy*, p. 161-180.

services of the Member States. This Service has its legal basis in the Article 27 paragraph 3 of the TEU, but its functioning and organisation are established by a decision of the Council acting on a proposal from the HR. The Council approved the guidelines on the role and functioning of the EEAS in October 2009<sup>20</sup>, in accordance in which the EEAS is under the authority of the HR. The HR relies on the Service for the preparation of proposals relating to the external policy of the EU and for the implementation of decisions adopted by the Council in this area of integration<sup>21</sup>. The European External Action Service may also be placed at the disposal of the President of the European Council, the President of the Commission and the other Commissioners for the issues connected with the EU external policy. However, the EEAS is unique and independent from the other EU institutions, formed by merger of the external relation departments of the Council and the European Commission and it also has its own budget.

As mentioned above, there are multiple actors representing the EU abroad: the Presidency in office, the High Representative, the Commission president, and the commissioner charged with external relations, who often present conflicting views. The Treaty of Lisbon would clearly help streamline representation by reducing the number of actors, though it still remains to be seen how many of the new actors work in practice. However, The Treaty of Lisbon bring two main benefits to EU foreign policy: the creation of an EU diplomatic service

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<sup>20</sup> Presidency report to the European Council on the European External Action Service, <http://register.consilium.europa.eu> (accessed November 15, 2013).

<sup>21</sup> See: Chiara Cellerino, *The new European External Action Service and the Lisbon call for coherence of European External Action: issues of accountability and scope*, „The Columbia Journal of European Law“, no. 22, 2011.

and the attribution of a “legal personality” to the EU<sup>22</sup>. This allow the EU to enter into binding treaties, which should clarify and streamline the EU’s ability to make external agreement.

### **The High Representative on the international stage**

Generally, it is widely known about unfortunate start of Ashton’s office, her lack of charisma, experience in diplomacy, lack of orientation in the Eastern Policy, her lack of coordination (for example during providing aid after the earthquake Haiti) and the lack of the determined reaction to social protests in Tunisia, Libya or Egypt<sup>23</sup>. She was criticised for not visiting Haiti, after the earthquake of January 2010, and for not having promptly issued declarations enhancing the visibility of her role and of EU foreign policy after the emergence of the Middle East spring. However, it should be noted that the Treaty of Lisbon improves the preconditions for a higher degree of coherence in European external relations and strengthens the EU as an international actor, even if the success of the European foreign policy, still depends to a great extent on the Member States’ ability and willingness to cooperate.

Following the 2010 Haiti earthquake, Ashton chaired a meeting of the foreign relations, development and environment Directorates-General and experts from the Council and the Situation Centre (the EU intelligence-gathering agency). They all agreed on several matters: to

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<sup>22</sup> *The Foreign Policy of the European Union. Assessing...*, p. 344.

<sup>23</sup> See: Iwona Miedzińska, *Wspólna Polityka Zagraniczna i Bezpieczeństwa Unii Europejskiej*, in: *Traktat z Lizbony – wybrane zagadnienia*, ed. Maria Magdalena Kenig-Witkowska, Robert Grzeszczak, Warszawa: Stowarzyszenie Absolwentów Wydziału Prawa i Administracji Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2012, p. 171-172.

give an immediate aid of €3 million, to look for further financial assistance, to send personnel to assess the situation and to coordinate pledges from Member States. Ashton also chaired a further meeting of Member States ambassadors and acted as a general coordinator (e.g. contacts from the UN went *via* Ashton). Although she refused to describe it as the first act of the external action service, Ashton did emphasise that it was the first time when such a good coordination between all the various EU foreign policy actors had ever been accomplished<sup>24</sup>.

However, the majority of the aid relief was dealt bilaterally between Haiti and the individual Member States<sup>25</sup> and Ashton was criticised afterwards for being one of the very few foreign representatives not to travel to Haiti personally<sup>26</sup>. Despite EU ministers steps such as agreeing to deploy European gendarmes to keep peace on the island, criticism was levied at Ashton for failing to improve the EU's international profile during the crisis. Ashton replied stating that "There's been a recognition from the people of Haiti, the United States, the United Nations and others of the extremely important role the EU has played. On the main issue, we should ask, have we tried to save lives, to support the people of Haiti? Yes we have"<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> Spain, which held the rotating Council presidency that would have taken charge before the Treaty of Lisbon, took a back seat though assisted, for example by offering use of the Spanish base in Panama.

<sup>25</sup> Andrew Rettman, *EU foreign relations chief tests new powers in earthquake response*, EUobserver, <http://euobserver.com/foreign/29266> (accessed November 11, 2012).

<sup>26</sup> Honor Mahony, *Ashton under fire for not going to Haiti*, EUobserver, <http://euobserver.com/news/29299> (accessed November 11, 2012).

<sup>27</sup> Andrew Rettman, *EU to send gendarmerie force to Haiti*, Euobserver, <http://euobserver.com/foreign/29336> (accessed November 11, 2012).

Criticism continued to mount, including complaints that Ashton skipped a defence meeting in order to attend the inauguration of Ukraine's Prime Minister<sup>28</sup>, alleged bias towards British officials, that she has no language skills and risked a UK-French feud over creating an EU military planning headquarters<sup>29</sup>. Notwithstanding, she has been defended by some, including Commissioner Günther Oettinger on the ground that she has had to take on a job that combines three previous jobs and is working on establishing the EEAS so she is unable to take on everything at once, nor please everyone<sup>30</sup>. Despite early Spanish assistance during 2010, Ashton did find herself competing with the Spanish foreign minister on who was going to be speaking for the EU<sup>31</sup> and the need to find consensus between the Member States and institutions pushed back the expected operational date of the EEAS from spring 2010 to December 2010<sup>32</sup>. In contrast to the Spanish position, in

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<sup>28</sup> Martin Banks, *Criticism of Ashton is 'unfair'*, theParliament.com, <http://www.theparliament.com/latest-news/article/newsarticle/new-commissioner-defends-ashton-amid-unfair-criticism> (accessed November 11, 2012).

<sup>29</sup> Ian Traynor, *Ashton defends start in EU foreign policy role*, The Guardian, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/mar/10/lady-ashton-military-headquarters-brussels> (accessed November 11, 2012).

<sup>30</sup> Martin Banks, *Criticism of Ashton is 'unfair'*, theParliament.com, <http://www.theparliament.com/latest-news/article/newsarticle/new-commissioner-defends-ashton-amid-unfair-criticism> (accessed November 11, 2012).

<sup>31</sup> Andrew Rettman, *Poland to showcase its EU credentials in Brussels extravaganza*, EUobserver, <http://euobserver.com/institutional/30236> (accessed November 11, 2012).

<sup>32</sup> Honor Mahony, *Negotiators rush to get EU diplomatic service ready*, EUobserver, <http://euobserver.com/news/30238> (accessed November 11, 2012).

2011 Polish foreign minister Radoslaw Sikorski said he would act as Ashton's "loyal deputy"<sup>33</sup>.

Secretary General Pierre Vimont joined those defending Ashton from criticism and praised her work during the opening of the EEAS office in Benghazi, Libya, as making the EEAS very popular in Libya. He has also supported her over Syria and asked her to stand for a second term. Polish Minister for Europe Mikolaj Dowgielewicz also stated that the criticism against Ashton was "a lot of hot air" and that "she has an impossible job to do and she is doing it well. At the end of her time in office, people will be more positive about what she has done. She will leave a real legacy"<sup>34</sup>. However, former European Commission adviser Dr Fraser Cameron argued that "the criticism one hears of Ashton is pretty strong and it will be difficult to overcome the bad press she has. It represents a problem for the EEAS, when it comes to public diplomacy, and reflects the system we have for choosing leaders. Too often, the EEAS is waiting until the last member state signs up to the position; they could set out a view much earlier. When you look at places like Egypt - Cathy has been five times, but people are still not quite sure what the EEAS does or who speaks for Europe. The glass is less than half full. I think the criticism of Ashton is down to style and morale in the EEAS is not as good as it should be"<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> Andrew Rettman, *Polish minister pledges loyalty to EU's Ashton*, EUobserver, <http://euobserver.com/pl2011/32580> (accessed November 11, 2012).

<sup>34</sup> Dean Carroll, *Catherine Ashton for a second term at the EEAS?*, Public Service Europe, <http://www.publicserviceeurope.com/article/811/catherine-ashton-for-a-second-term-at-the-eeas> (accessed November 11, 2012).

<sup>35</sup> Dean Carroll, *Catherine Ashton for a second term...* (accessed November 11, 2012).



In spite of that, starting from the second half of 2010 the criticism of Ashton died down, however UE is still a great absent in the world's most important matters. Baroness Ashton tends to be only an arranger of the EU Member States relations<sup>36</sup>. This is due to the fact that the High Representative is responsible for only co-ordinating the EU's foreign policy and building consensus between Member States. The HR's specific powers are largely undefined and are likely to be shaped by Catherine Ashton and the next people holding this post in the coming years. Moreover, actual decisions on CFSP are still made by Member States in the European Council. There was an agreement here that involved the EU in peacekeeping in Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Congo in 2003, as well as observer missions in Gaza (2004) and Indonesia (2005). In April 2007, EU foreign ministers agreed to implement sanctions against Iran following its refusal to halt uranium enrichment. In 2008, sanctions were imposed against Zimbabwe following a violent and undemocratic Presidential election, and the EU launched its first maritime operation to prevent piracy off the coast of Somalia. The European Council also issues 'common strategies' on issues about which Members States agree, many as part of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). These include strategies on promoting democracy and peace in Russia, the eastern Mediterranean and the Ukraine. The EU has diplomatic missions in several important countries, under the authority of the High Representative.

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<sup>36</sup> She has used this deadline in pronouncement from 12 January 2011 during meeting with the socialist in European Parliament, saying about possible EU's operation on international scene.

However, the criticism of Ashton has stopped, 2013 was a year of changed perceptions on Ashton and her leadership skills, thanks to successes to reach deals between Kosovo and Serbia and most recently her firm pursuit of a deal to curb Iran's nuclear program has won her a lot of good press and history's verdict seems to change about her. Ashton herself has shown the skill to patiently broker this important deal that was considered by many as simply impossible. Her ability to stay on the sidelines has proven an asset in the negotiation room. In May 2012, Ashton was honoured with the BusinessMed Blue Award, which was presented to her in recognition of her efforts in promoting peace and economic development in the Mediterranean region<sup>37</sup>. Another success Ashton was that she has formally launched the EEAS on 1 December 2010 at a low key event where she outlined the relations with the United States and China, climate change, poverty eradication, crisis management and counter-terrorism as her key priorities<sup>38</sup>. Her determination in start-up of the EEAS seems to confirm Ashton's preference for institutions rather than for policies, something that may lead her to contribute more to EU bureaucratic rather than security culture.

After more than four years of functioning post of HR's, comments on the appointment of Ashton and her activity on the international stage are still vary. On the one hand, she is referred to as a weak figure because of her lack of visible experience for the post of foreign policy chief. On the other hand, her previous experience as a Commissioner

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<sup>37</sup> See: <http://www.eeas.europa.eu/ashton>.

<sup>38</sup> Andrew Rettman, *Ashton names EU foreign-service priorities at low-key launch event*, EUobserver, <http://euobserver.com/institutional/31413> (accessed November 11, 2012).

for Trade may change the working style in the field of the CFSP in favour of a greater consideration of the European interests, because as a member of the European Commission, she worked in the EU's supranational institution and was accustomed to advocate the European idea and European interests<sup>39</sup>.

## Conclusion

With regard to the EU's foreign policy, the Treaty of Lisbon introduced three major institutional innovations: the post of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the position of the President of the European Council and the European External Action Service. The post of the HR intends to put a "name and face" on the EU policy abroad and help the EU become a capable, coherent and strategic global actor. Thus, with the growing role of the High Representative and his exclusion from the European Council, the national foreign ministers are now uncertain of their role in relation to this institution. At an informal meeting in Finland it was mooted that they could serve as special envoys on the High Representative's behalf. This has been backed by Ashton who said that so long as the EU spoke with one voice it didn't matter who was speaking<sup>40</sup>. These words shake

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<sup>39</sup> Kateryna Koehler, *European Foreign Policy After Lisbon: Strengthening the EU as an International Actor*, „Caucasian Review of International Affairs“, no. 4(1), 2010, p. 67.

<sup>40</sup> Honor Mahony, *EU foreign ministers ponder their post-Lisbon role*, EUobserver, <http://euobserver.com/institutional/29676> (accessed November 15, 2013). By the contrast, while he was presenting his European Security Strategy as a High Representative Solana noted that "Une Europe plus forte dotée d'une vision stratégique commune, c'est aussi une Europe capable de consolider ses

the purpose of the reform introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon. They show that the High Representative is not and in the nearest future will not be somebody that Henry Kissinger was waiting for: the one it will be possible to call to asking about the position of the European Union. It is still not a phone number to talk to Europe.

As is apparent from the above, in this area of integration Member States are united only in a theory but in practice they are still strongly divided. The differences among them are to some extent unavoidable because each Member State has its individual history that affects its interests and national foreign policy which are in these conditions repeatedly hard to reconcile with other Member States and the EU's institutions. This leads to the general conclusion: the EU will continue to be "an economic giant and at the same time a political and military dwarf"<sup>41</sup> in international relations. Thus, even more harmonisation between national foreign policies needs to be done to have a coherent and effective EU foreign policy. Firstly, they were consistent with the objectives of protecting EU citizens and external representation. Ashton as a HR represented the EU position at several occasions, even though this position was due to manifold different opinions of the Member States not always easy to define. However concrete decisions, e.g. sanctions, lead to a minimal common position, which was represented externally.

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relations à la fois avec les autres grands acteurs (...) et avec les autres grandes organisations".

<sup>41</sup> Dariusz Milczarek, *Foreign and security policy – a challenge and a strategic choice for the European Union of the 21st Century*, in: *EUROPE – The Global Challenges*, ed. Antoni Kukliński, Krzysztof Pawłowski, Nowy Sącz: Wyższa Szkoła Biznesu National Louis University, 2005, p. 138.

Ashton is able to do so with “quiet diplomacy” in the world’s hot spots. In comparison to her activist predecessor Javier Solana, she deliberately sought a much lower profile as the EU’s first foreign policy chief. However, in diplomacy sometimes it is more important to be silent and rather manage the process. Although she might not say so much as others, people close to her say that she can sum up, synthesize and put forward ideas for the next step – all what doing a good diplomat, also on the highest level. Despite the improvements of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU can still only provide mechanisms to facilitate consensus when it comes to CFSP. Eventually, the High Representative works with the mandate provided by the Member States: he can encourage them consensus, but he cannot force it on them.

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