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Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Green MEP Barbara Lochbihler gives our assessment of High Representative Federica Mogherini

What is your overall impression of how the High Representative designate Federica Mogherini performed?

All in all, Federica Mogherini left a rather positive impression. She was able to answer most questions and showed good knowledge of the different dossiers. However, on many issues including a few raised by the Greens, she remained quite vague and imprecise. She repeatedly referred to the importance of international law and human rights, and seemed willing to fight for a common European perspective in foreign affairs – in close cooperation with the European Parliament. However, it remains to be seen how she exactly intends to do so.

Were there particular issues or answers that stood out – either in a positive or negative sense?

On the plus side, Mogherini repeatedly referred to human rights as a compass in EU foreign policy. She briefly raised the issue of double standards and lack of coherence between policy fields (i.e. trade and human rights) in her opening speech, and referred to supporting human rights defenders and civil society organisations as an integral part of her agenda. Also, she took a very European perspective and emphasised the importance of including all actors in conflict resolution. Finally, she assured Parliament that climate change was at the top of her priority list – which is quite a novelty compared to her predecessor Catherine Ashton. On the negative side, Mogherini wouldn't answer my question on whether she planned to fight for binding human rights standards in the framework of the intended development and use of European armed drones by 2020. While, as Italian foreign minister, she was obviously aware of the refugee crisis and confirmed the EU's obligation to save lives, she didn't elaborate on how saving lives and an ever-more restrictive EU border control regime could possibly fit together. Also, Mogherini didn't put forward concrete proposals on how to reform the External Action Service, and how to remedy the lack of funding in EU external relations. She also showed no concrete reaction to the question on whether she was willing to withdraw trade preferences in the face of human rights violations by partner countries. Finally, her analysis of the current crisis in and around Syria/Iraq fell short of concrete proposals.

Do you think she is suitable for the portfolio for which she has been proposed?

Despite a number of vague replies: YES.

Out of ten, what marks would you give her hearing performance?

7+

- Greens/EFA Members of thee Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET)

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