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EU External Action Service

EEAS starts work with questions over political direction still unanswered

The European External Action Service will officially start work on 1 December, one year after the Lisbon Treaty came into force and the start of Catherine Ashton's term as high representative. Commenting on this occasion, **Franziska Brantner**, Greens/EFA foreign affairs co-spokesperson, said:

"The start of the External Action Service is an important moment for the EU but, unfortunately, key questions over the political direction of the EEAS remain unanswered. Regrettably, despite plenty of well-meaning rhetoric, high representative Ashton has failed to set clear political priorities and develop a clear vision for Europe's foreign policy. Clearly, Ms Ashton found herself in a difficult situation: an office without precedent, with many hats but no job description, and no department to back her up. However, one year into her term and with the launch of the EEAS, there is now no more room for excuses.

"It is time for Ms Ashton to give the EEAS a clear direction and set out the role she wants Europe to play as a global actor in the 21st century. We would like Ms Ashton to use the new External Action Service to make the EU a champion of conflict prevention, civilian crisis management, peacebuilding and the promotion of human rights. To make this happen, Ms Ashton must take the right decisions when building up the EEAS: newly created posts must be earmarked for civilian conflict management and mediation and the crisis management structures in the new foreign service must finally get a strong civilian component."

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