Press release | 11.05.2011

EU foreign policy

Ashton failing to grasp her job

The European Parliament today debated EU foreign policy with the EU's high representative for foreign policy Cathy Ashton. The Greens have criticised the repeated failure of the EU to agree coherent, common positions on crucial foreign policy issues and the failure of the high representative to be more proactive in forging common positions. After the debate Green MEP and foreign policy spokesperson **Franziska Brantner** said:

"EU foreign policy is suffering from a chronic lack of direction, leadership and imagination under Cathy Ashton's watch, despite the fact the Union today has more foreign policy competences and instruments than ever.

"Clearly, Cathy Ashton is failing to grasp what her job is. Instead of proactively forging common positions, she passively waits until EU governments have outlined their positions, the lowest common denominator of which she then presents as her proposal. This is not how the role of the high representative was devised. The Lisbon treaty envisaged the role to be that of an agenda-setter, driving forward EU foreign policy with their own ideas and initiatives.

"If individual member states block key decisions – for example as occurred with the recent failure to impose sanctions on Syrian despot Assad – the role of the high representative should not be to hide behind governments. Instead, she should setting out the course of action she believes to be right and clearly naming the governments that oppose this course to ensure a transparent public debate.

"Cathy Ashton will only be able to address ever mounting doubts about her role as high representative becoming more courageous and more decisive, rather than kowtowing to national governments."

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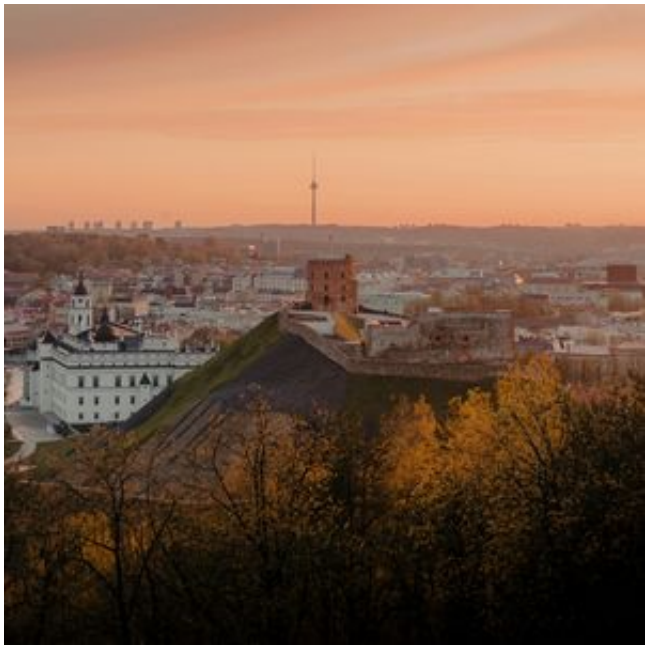
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