Press release | 22.06.2010

European External Action Service

Greens welcome agreement on the External Action Service but deplore lack of ambition

Commenting on the outcome of yesterday's inter-institutional negotiations on the European External Action Service in Madrid, **Franziska Brantner**, foreign affairs spokesperson of the Greens/EFA Group, said:

"The political agreement reached yesterday is a step in the right direction compared to the original proposal presented by Catherine Ashton in March. A better service could have been possible, though, and we regret that Ms Ashton, the Commission and a number of national governments didn't have the guts to embrace a more ambitious solution.

"The agreement is a promise on the future. It can serve to better integrate Commission, Council and Member States policies, but it may also merely preserve the status quo while creating additional bureaucracy and costs. It is now up to Ms Ashton, Member States and the Commission to deliver. They will need to work together, create a common "esprit de corps" and overcome divisive competition.

"One point in case and one of the toughest fights has been about crisis management. The creation of the EEAS offered the unique opportunity to bring together Europe's wide range of existing conflict management tools, strengthen the Union's civilian capabilities, and design an integrated and comprehensive crisis management and peacebuilding policy. Though the agreement's language remains vague and must be clarified in the coming days, my group managed to keep the door open for seizing this opportunity against the fierce resistance of the French government, which wanted to make EU crisis management a mere tool of its national foreign policy, narrowly defined in military terms and constrained by purely intergovernmental decision-making, and amid irresponsible and incredible apathy of Angela Merkel and Guido Westerwelle. The German government must finally wake up to the challenges and ensure that Ms Ashton receives the support she needs to implement yesterday's agreement in a way that enables the EU to engage in truly comprehensive civilian conflict management.

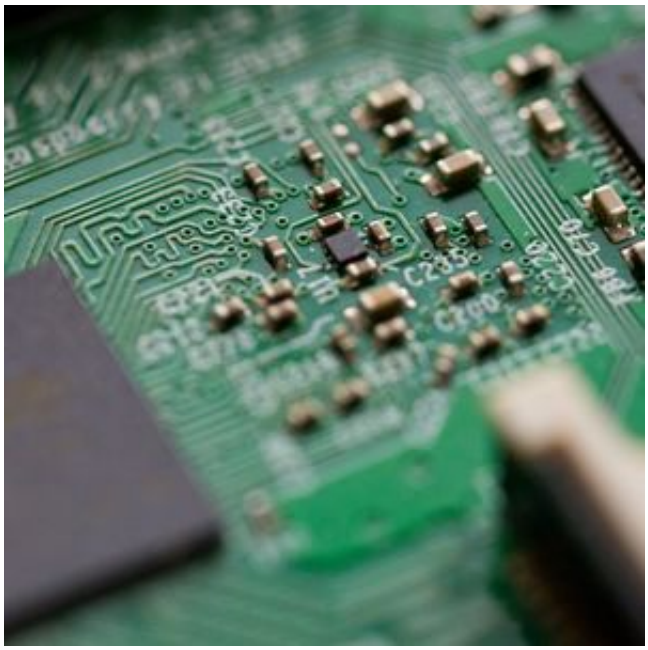
"My group has also pushed hard for an effective structure for the promotion and mainstreaming of human rights policies, and I am delighted that our pressure paid off: Whereas human rights weren't even mentioned in Ms Ashton's original proposal and the Council compromise position, Ms Ashton now committed to the creation of a human rights department at the EEAS headquarters and human rights focal points in the Union delegations. Likewise, my group succeeded in establishing safeguards preventing development objectives being brushed aside by other foreign policy considerations. Further improvements dear to my group include strengthened democratic scrutiny of the EEAS, a more transparent foreign affairs budget and gender balance in recruitment. The fact that we have had to fight so hard for Parliament's scrutiny rights is a shame. National governments still haven't understood that EU foreign policy needs democratic legitimacy to be accepted by Europe's citizens.

"Much will now depend on whether Ms Ashton delivers on the often vague promises she made yesterday. If she finally demonstrates the leadership needed in the face of resistance from jealous national governments and a jealous Commission president, the new service will indeed be able to effectively integrate Commission and Council resources and make the Union a champion of human rights, development and civilian crisis management. Otherwise, all we will have got is more bureaucracy with little added value for Europe's citizens and the Union's foreign policy."

Recommended

Press release

chris-ried



Digital Fairness Act falls short on addictive design

11.11.2026

Press release



[Ukrainian children in Russia: Parliament to call for u…]

11.11.2026

Press release

Redek Kozak



[Czech public media under attack - with Markéta Gregoro…]

11.11.2026

Press release



Greens/EFA in Vilnius: Lithuanian Presidency must lead…

05.11.2026

Please share

- E-Mail