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Press release | 26.08.2010

Recruitment of new EU ambassadors

External Action Service must not become an old boys club

Commenting on media reports that EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton intends to appoint hardly any women and Eastern Europeans as EU ambassadors, **Franziska Brantner**, foreign affairs spokesperson of the Greens/EFA Group, said:

"Ms Ashton's first staffing decisions could hardly be worse: not even one out of 10 ambassadors would be female, a total of 2 of the 115 ambassadors would come from Eastern Europe [1]. This is in stark contrast to Ms Ashton's promise to Parliament that gender equality would be a priority for her. Provided the media reports prove true, Ms Ashton would clearly renege on that promise. Even worse: She would also ignore EU law. Based on an initiative of the Greens group, the European Parliament enshrined in the founding act of the European External Action Service that Ms Ashton must ensure gender and geographical balance among her diplomats [2].

"Ashton must change course immediately. The appointments to be made this autumn must sufficiently allow for women candidates and applicants from newer member states and considerably increase the proportion of women in the new service. As long as this is not the case, the Greens group will push for Parliament to freeze the funding for the new service. The External Action Service must not become a Western European old boys club."

Note for editors:

[1] According to media reports, EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton plans to fill numerous ambassadorial posts in the EU delegations. Her proposal, reportedly ready to be released, would result in 11 of the 115 ambassadorial positions being held by women and 2 by Eastern Europeans. The media reports are based on figures released by the Polish Institute for Foreign Relations (PISM).

EUobserver: http://euobserver.com/9/30672

Der Standard (in German): http://derstandard.at/1282273587779/EU-Aussendienst-Osteuropa-schaut-bei-EU-Aussendienst-durch-die-Finger

[2] Article 6 (6) of the Decision establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service reads: "Recruitment to the EEAS shall be based on merit whilst ensuring adequate geographical and gender balance. [...]"

The Decision can be found at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:201:0030:0040:EN:PDF

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