

European Union Committee
Sub-Committee C (Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Policy)
Inquiry into the European External Action Service

Indicators of a successful EEAS

Mikaela Gavas and Simon Maxwell
European Development Cooperation Strengthening Programme
Overseas Development Institute

Introduction

1. The key decisions on the European External Action Service have now been taken. The European Parliament voted in favour of a compromise agreement on 7 July. The full EU Council will formally confirm the decisions on 26 July.
2. This being the case, we suggest that the ‘exam questions’ are: (a) have the right decisions been taken? And (b) how will success in implementation be judged? We comment briefly on these two questions, proposing indicators we believe will demonstrate success or otherwise when a ‘status report’ on the EEAS is prepared in 2012, and a full review carried out in 2014.
3. Note that our perspective is that of international development, taken in its widest sense, to include not only aid, but also the wider agenda of ‘policy coherence’, covering trade, climate change, migration, agricultural policy, and security and defence. We reviewed all these in a report published in January 2010, jointly with three other European think-tanks, and entitled ‘New Challenges, New Beginnings: Next Steps in European Development Cooperation’¹.
4. We have been tracking the formation of the EEAS and contributing to the debate for the past eighteen months – through our own work, but also in collaboration with a group of European ‘change-makers’, and in alliance with fellow think-tanks in Germany, France,

¹ European Think-Tanks Group (2010), ‘New Challenges, New Beginnings: Next Steps in European Development Cooperation’. Accessed at: <http://www.pagegangster.com/p/yrrY0/>

Spain and the Netherlands, a formation known as the European Think-Tanks Group . Details of our engagement can be found at www.international-development.eu. A list of our publications is in Annex 1.

Have the right decisions been taken?

5. The EEAS negotiation was difficult, concerned with mandate, staffing, finance and accountability:
 - On 25 March, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs/Vice President of the Commission, Baroness Catherine Ashton, submitted an initial proposal on the establishment of the EEAS to Member States and the European Parliament for approval. The proposal was immediately rejected by Parliament on the grounds that it paid little attention to political accountability and proposed an 'artificial separation of part of the development competences between EEAS services and Commission services,' rendering it a 'recipe for incoherence'. The European Parliament also rejected the set-up in which a civil servant who would be the secretary-general would hold enormous power. They stressed that the three external relations Commissioners working with Baroness Ashton should be her three deputies as they would be 'politically responsible' and could represent the Service in its contact with Parliament.
 - On 21 June, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Spanish EU Presidency came to a compromise on the shape and functions of the new EEAS. Baroness Ashton accepted the Parliament's view that her deputies should be the Foreign Minister of the country holding the rotating EU presidency, and for the communitarian area of the service's activity, the relevant Commissioners. At the same time, the compromise also foresaw that Baroness Ashton would keep three high-level positions of 'secretary-general'. In an effort to ensure a more communitarian character for the EEAS, at least 60% of EEAS staff would be permanent EU officials rather than national diplomats. MEPs would have a say over a large portion of the service's finances, and must be informed in advance of strategic and policy decisions. On aid programming, the Commission and the EEAS services would work together under the responsibility of the Development Commissioner for developing countries and the Neighbourhood Commissioner for neighbouring countries.
 - On 7 July, 549 MEPs voted in favour of a compromise to create the EEAS, with 78 voting against. The European Parliament's services published a brief summing up the major decisions on the EEAS, where the MEPs had impacted upon the consultation process. These are: (1) Substitution of civil servants by EU Commissioners; (2) Control over external cooperation programmes to remain the responsibility of the Commissioner; (3) At least 60% of EEAS staff to be made up of EU officials; (4) Political accountability with EU Special Representatives and Heads of Delegations to appear before the Foreign Affairs Committee, the High Representative to seek Parliament's views on the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and access to confidential documents; (5) Budgetary accountability with Parliament receiving from the Commission a document clearly accounting for

the external action parts of the Commission budget, including the establishment plans of the EU's Delegations, as well as the external action expenditure per country and per mission; and (6) A human rights structure at Headquarters and locally in the Delegations as well as a department assisting the High Representative with her relations with Parliament.

- On staffing, on 1 January 2011, a total of 1,525 civil servants from the Commission and the Council's General Secretariat will be transferred to the EEAS. 100 new posts have been created. Recourse to seconded national experts will be limited to these experts, who will not be counted as staff from member states (one third of the total).
 - On the budget, the first real budget for the EEAS will come in the second semester of 2010, at a proposed figure of €9.5 million.
6. From the perspective of those concerned with international development, the main challenge was to design a model which translated the principles of EU development cooperation enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty into operational structures. An [open letter](#) by the European Think Tanks Group in May 2010² and a subsequent [policy brief](#) in June 2010³ set out four tests for the design of the new service. These were a service which would:
- promote the coherence of all internal and external EU policies and instruments with development objectives;
 - ensure aid programming is informed by development principles rather than foreign policy interests;
 - have a properly staffed service on the development side; and
 - offer appropriate accountability to the European Parliament.
7. On the first of the four tests set by the European Think-Tanks Group, policy coherence, the text states:

‘In its contribution to the EU external cooperation programmes, the EEAS should seek to ensure that these programmes respond to the objectives for external action as set out in [Article 21](#) and that they respect the objectives of EU development policy in line with [Article 208](#). In this context, the EEAS should also promote the fulfilment of the objectives of the European Consensus on Development and the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.’ Article 21 states that sustainable development is one of the objectives of EU external action alongside democracy, the rule of law, human rights, conflict prevention, global trade integration, environmental protection, disaster management and multilateral cooperation. Article 208

² European Think-Tanks Group (2010), ‘The main challenges to development in EU global action’. Accessed at: <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/details.asp?id=4838&title=open-letter-european-union>

³ European Think-Tanks Group (2010), ‘Development-proofing the European External Action Service’. Accessed at: <http://internationaldevelopmenteu.files.wordpress.com/2010/05/development-proofing-the-eeas-final1.pdf>

states that the primary objective of EU development policy is poverty eradication.

8. 'Seeking' to ensure policy coherence for development may not be the strong and ambitious statement one would hope for. It is however strengthened with references to the commitment to policy coherence for development in the Lisbon Treaty and the European Consensus on Development.
9. On the second test, aid programming, the new text states:

'With regard to the European Development Fund and the Development Cooperation Instrument, any proposals, including those for changes in the basic regulations and the programming documents in paragraph 3 above, shall be prepared **jointly** by the relevant services in the EEAS and in the Commission under the **responsibility** of the Commissioner responsible for Development Policy and then jointly submitted with the High Representative for decision by the Commission.'
10. The idea is that the Commission and the EEAS will work together on identifying and analysing country needs, priorities and performance and allocating aid accordingly. The proposals will be jointly submitted by the High Representative and the Development Commissioner to the College of Commissioners, effectively creating a 'dual key' or veto over aid programming. Commentators have consistently argued that the wording of the original text was too vague regarding the actual authority of the Development Commissioner over programming. The text now clearly states that aid programming is the responsibility of the Development Commissioner, which effectively means that the Development Commissioner will need to sign off on all programming documents produced by the EEAS. However, in case of disagreement between the Development Commissioner and the High Representative, it will be the College of Commissioners who will make the decision.
11. On the third test, staffing, the European Think-Tanks Group argued that it would be crucial for the EEAS to be staffed properly on the development side, with a Director General responsible for development, supported by strategic policy staff and with authority over the development units transferred into the EEAS from the Commission. In practice, DG Development will be sliced down the middle with geographical desks moved over into a DG Thematic in the EEAS. DG Thematic will deal with a whole range of global issues, from climate change to development cooperation.
12. Finally, on accountability, Baroness Ashton's original proposal provided for a Secretary-General who would hold enormous power and at the same time, no parliamentary oversight of the EEAS and of decisions involving Community funds. The Members of the European Parliament insisted that the three Commissioners working with Baroness Ashton and her three deputies – who would be seen as 'politically responsible' – should represent the service in its contact with Parliament.
13. Parliament managed to win this battle, ensuring that senior appointees to the EEAS are politically accountable to the Parliament when carrying out their duties. The final text states that Baroness Ashton's deputies will be the Foreign Minister of the country holding the rotating EU presidency, and for the Communitarian area of the service's activity, the

relevant Commissioners - Štefan Füle, the Czech Commissioner for enlargement, Andris Piebalgs, his Latvian colleague responsible for development, and Kristalina Georgieva, the Bulgarian Commissioner for humanitarian aid. They also won the battle to have discharge authority over the entire budget of the new service. This is a big win for the European Parliament which could, in the future, be used as leverage for influence.

14. While the result is not ideal, it is better than first expected. On paper, international development occupies a place at the forefront of the EU's external policy and some safeguards have been put in place to protect its poverty focus. The draft decision gives the EEAS a role in shaping strategy and in programming development cooperation programmes for all regions of the world. It will coordinate all external action and will bring together all geographical desks. This will allow it to focus on overall political coordination of external action, whilst leaving the management of programmes to EuropeAid in the Commission. Thematic programmes will stay with the relevant Commissioner and be presented to the College in agreement with the High Representative and other relevant Commissioners. The draft decision emphasises that responsibility for aid programming rests with the Development Commissioner. The stated intention is to improve the links between development and foreign policy, combine the Commission's technical expertise with the Council's political weight, and thus increase the EU's global role. The European Parliament will have a say over a large portion of the service's finances, and will be informed in advance of strategic and policy decisions.

15. Specifically, the strengths of the draft decision are:

- a. Bringing together the different strands of EU policy and a unified geographical desk system offers the potential for a coherent and consistent approach in all developing countries;
- b. Single geographic desks avoids duplication, minimises transaction costs and cuts red tape;
- c. Explicit references to the commitment to poverty eradication and to ensuring all EU policies take account of development objectives in the Lisbon Treaty and the European Consensus on Development ensures the prominence of EU development policy;
- d. The clear reference to aid programming under the responsibility of the Development Commissioner, implying that the Development Commissioner will need to sign off on all programming documents produced by the EEAS, will strengthen the Development Commissioner's leverage over ensuring that development policy actually informs country and regional strategies;
- e. The decision to render the Foreign Minister of the country holding the rotating EU presidency and the relevant Commissioners for the Communitarian area of the EEAS' activity deputies of the High Representative/Vice President, will ensure appropriate accountability of the EEAS to the European Parliament;
- f. Granting the European Parliament discharge authority over the entire budget of the EEAS will ensure checks and balances of budgetary allocation.

16. On the other hand, the weaknesses of the draft decision are:

- a. Separating geographic desks which deal with programming and thematic desks which develop policy will weaken the Development Commissioner's leverage over ensuring that development policy actually informs country and regional strategies. It will make it difficult for the Development Commissioner to exercise a 'development check' on development programming and the general orientation of EU external action;
 - b. In any disagreement between the Development Commissioner and the High Representative on issues related to aid programming, the case will be put to the College of Commissioners to make the final decision. With little staff capacity to defend his position, this may put the Development Commissioner at a disadvantage;
 - c. DG Thematic in the EEAS will deal with a wide range of global issues, from development cooperation to climate change, yet expertise does not go beyond core former DG RELEX dossiers;
 - d. Historically, DG RELEX has a better track record in prioritising conflict and peace issues in country-level strategies. However, the Cotonou Partnership Agreement – the most comprehensive agreement between developing countries and the EU – already has some of the most progressive rules on aid programming and implementation that are meant to foster ownership, alignment and domestic, as well as mutual, accountability. The proposed structure could reinforce the divide between the DG RELEX and DG Development approaches, with the EEAS doing the bulk of development programming and with a reduced DG Development formulating development policy and DG EuropeAid managing annual action planning and implementation. The left-overs in DG Development would do well to merge with EuropeAid, creating a policy and implementation directorate, as this would increase DG Development's control over operational budgets and thereby its political relevance;
 - e. The functioning of the EEAS will probably remain determined by the current distinction between two cultures: a Communitarian-like culture inherited from DG RELEX (which will be numerically dominant in the EEAS, and which will most likely have the greatest influence on the geographic and thematic Directorate Generals, and on EU Delegations); and a political culture inherited from the Council policy unit and crisis management structures. In this respect, the EEAS might internalise past bureaucratic conflicts, rather than do away with them.
17. An important risk factor is where the reorganisation will leave the services managed directly by the Development Commissioner, Andris Piebalgs. EuropeAid remains untouched but now reports to the Development Commissioner rather than the External Affairs Commissioner. This is a positive change. DG Development, on the other hand, has been divided into two and weakened in the process. In our view, it would have been better, and still would be, to merge the remaining part of DG Development and EuropeAid, into a single Directorate-General.
18. It is also worth saying that there would have been better ways to organise this. From a UK perspective, the DFID model has many attractive features, with a Cabinet-level Secretary of

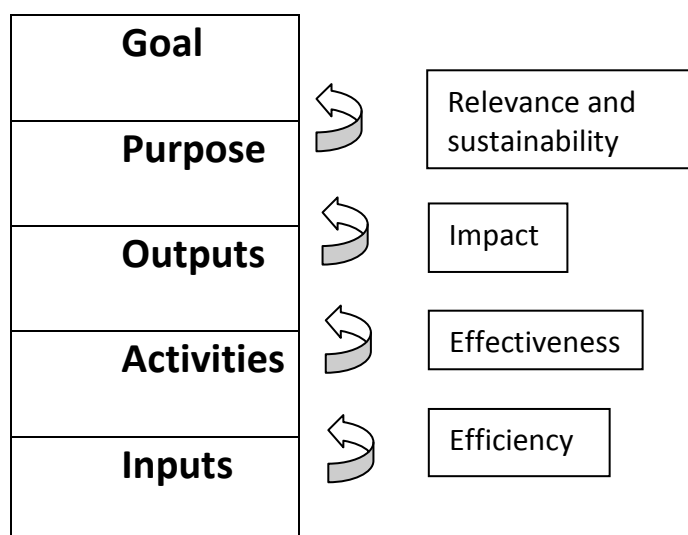
State responsible for all aspects of development policy and implementation, and also for humanitarian assistance.

Recognising success in implementation

19. From the perspective of international development, success in implementation of the EEAS can be thought of in terms of a logical hierarchy, from goal and purpose at the top, to the management of inputs at the bottom. Using evaluation terminology, the task will be to judge the relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the new arrangements.
20. Figure 1 illustrates the relationships. In a simple project example, the goal might be poverty reduction, the purpose a more educated population, the outputs well-functioning schools, the activities building schools and training teachers, and the inputs materials, people and cash. The definition of the goal drives the need for specific inputs. The provision of the inputs makes the goal possible.

Figure 1

A logical framework structure for monitoring and evaluation



21. For our purposes, the over-arching goals can be defined in terms of poverty reduction, well-being, human development, environmental sustainability, peace, security, and other global measures of progress (Lisbon Treaty, Article 21). For the time being, these are best captured by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which focus on poverty reduction and environmental sustainability, though not so much on peace and security. The MDG Summit in September 2010 is unlikely to change the MDGs, which run to 2015, though it may set in train a process to define goals for the period after 2015.
22. At the next level down, the indicator will be whether or not the elements necessary to deliver the MDGs and other goals are in place. Is the global economy growing? Is climate change being managed? Is the world more or less peaceful? The EU will not be the only actor in this space. National policy in developing countries will be central. Nevertheless,

the EU will help to shape the international context. For example, the Foreign Affairs Council in June adopted a work programme on Policy Coherence for Development, with an emphasis on a proactive approach to trade and finance, climate change, food security, migration and security.

23. Moving down the hierarchy, an indicator will be whether the new institutional arrangements, including the EEAS, are making the desired contribution in terms of outputs. The phrase 'desired contribution' begs a number of questions, of course. Some would like to see the EU playing a bigger role, with, for example, a greater share of Community aid than the current 20 per cent being channelled through the Commission. Others would like to see the role restricted to one of framework-setting and coordination, as for example through the EU Code of Conduct on Division of Labour in aid. We have termed the first view 'consolidation' and the second 'cooperation', and have explored different options using the notion of the EU 'swingometer'.⁴ In 2010-11, the Commission will launch a review of the European Consensus on Development, which will explore the positioning of the swingometer. We have urged that this process should be accelerated, in order to articulate an unambiguous 'Commander's Intent'⁵ on development cooperation. The indicator of success will be whether or not a common approach has been agreed and implemented.
24. In the meantime, the work programme on policy coherence illustrates the kind of outputs the EU might deliver. On trade, for example, it suggests targets and indicators that are stronger than the summary: a conclusion to the Doha Round that is 'ambitious, comprehensive and balanced'. On security: specific commitments to develop EU wide political strategies for conflict-affected countries, and specific measures to control the spread of small arms.
25. The indicators become more specific at the level of activities and inputs. Are the EU institutions:
- Addressing the right issues in EU external action?
 - Functioning in a coherence and consistent way across the EU?
 - Working well across the services?
 - Maintaining a poverty-focused, effective and cost-effective stream of development and humanitarian work?
 - Managing the divide between programming and implementation, ensuring that policy informs programming?
 - Working in a transparent and accountable way, involving and consulting stakeholders?

⁴ Gavas, M., Johnson, D., Maxwell, S. (2010), 'Consolidation or Cooperation: The Future of EU Development Cooperation', DIE Discussion Paper. Accessed at: [http://www.die-gdi.de/CMS-Homepage/openwebcms3.nsf/\(ynDK_contentByKey\)/ANES-875B3N/\\$FILE/DP%206.2010.pdf](http://www.die-gdi.de/CMS-Homepage/openwebcms3.nsf/(ynDK_contentByKey)/ANES-875B3N/$FILE/DP%206.2010.pdf)

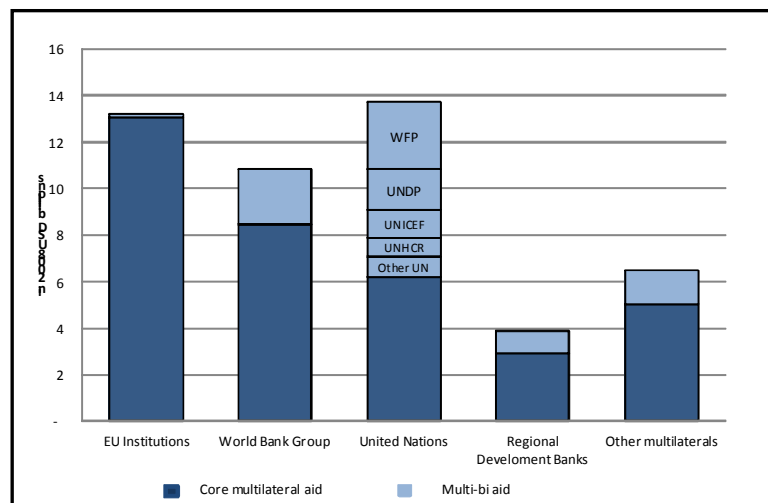
⁵ Maxwell, S. (2010) 'EU development policy: Time to articulate the Commander's Intent', Europe's World. Accessed at: http://www.europesworld.org/NewEnglish/Home_old/CommunityPosts/tabid/809/PostID/1563/EUdevelopmentpolicyTimetoarticulatetheCommandersIntent.aspx

26. There have been some early indications of success. The EU response to the Haiti emergency was led by Baroness Ashton, speaking not just for all parts of the Commission, but also for Member States. A similar approach is being adopted at the MDG Summit. An indicator for 2012 is whether many more such examples can be cited.
27. Another example is that in 2010, cross-Commission policy papers are promised on Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa. Will there be a collection of these by 2012 or 2014?

Conclusion

28. Our own view is that the EEAS settlement is not bad. A recent blog was entitled 'Result! A development-proof external action service. Almost'.⁶ The critical constraint on the EU delivering more effectively on the development agenda is now the capacity of the Commission (including the EEAS) to deliver the activities and outputs required. This applies wherever the pendulum is placed on the EU swingometer. Even with a 20 per cent share of European aid, the Commission is spending €10 billion a year, which makes it larger in financial terms than the World Bank and only slightly smaller than the whole UN system (Figure 2). It clearly does not match up to either of those bodies in policy weight or influence. It should be a priority to address that issue.

Figure 2
Total use of the multilateral system in 2008
(excluding EC and Korea as donors)
Gross ODA disbursements



Mikaela Gavas, Research Associate, Overseas Development Institute
 Simon Maxwell, Senior Research Associate, Overseas Development Institute
 July 2010

⁶ Gavas, M. (2010), 'Result! A development-proof European External Action Service. Almost', Overseas Development Institute. Accessed at:

http://blogs.odi.org.uk/blogs/main/archive/2010/06/29/European_external_action_service.aspx

Annex 1

ODI Publications on the European External Action Service

- Gavas, M. (2010), 'Result! A development-proof European External Action Service. Almost', EDCSP Opinion 5, Overseas Development Institute, June 2010
- Gavas, M., Johnson, D. & Maxwell, S. (2010), 'Consolidation or Cooperation: The Future of EU Development Cooperation', DIE Discussion Paper, June 2010
- European Think-Tanks Group (2010), 'Development-proofing the European External Action Service', Policy Brief, June 2010
- European Think-Tanks Group (2010), 'The main challenges to development in EU global action', Open Letter, May 2010
- Gavas, M. & Koeb, E. (2010), 'Setting up the European External Action Service: Building a comprehensive approach', Overseas Development Institute Background Note, April 2010
- Maxwell, S. & Gavas, M. (2010), 'Reorganising Europe's foreign affairs: What role for international development', EDCSP Opinion 3, Overseas Development Institute, April 2010
- Maxwell, S. (2010), 'Two mottos for the new leadership team in Brussels', EDCSP Opinion 1, Overseas Development Institute, February 2010
- European Think-Tanks Group (2010), 'New Challenges, New Beginnings: Next Steps in European Development Cooperation', Overseas Development Institute, February 2010
- Maxwell, S. et al. (2009), 'Europe: The world awaits', Europe's World, October 2009
- Gavas, M. & Maxwell, S. (2009), 'From regional club to global player: how Lisbon could transform Europe' Overseas Development Institute, October 2009
- Gavas, M. (2009), 'Getting the EU's development architecture right!', The Broker, September 2009
- Maxwell, S. et al. (2009), 'Europe's global challenge: three crucial months', Open Democracy, Die Zeit, The Broker, September 2009
- Gavas, M. & Maxwell, S. (2009), 'Options for architectural reform in European Union development cooperation', Overseas Development Institute Background Note, August 2009
- Gavas, M. (2009), 'The evolution of EU development cooperation: Taking the change agenda forward', Overseas Development Institute, Background Paper, April 2009