



EUROPEAN UNION

Strasbourg, 11 September 2012
A 402/12

Speech by High Representative Catherine Ashton in the European Parliament on the Brok Report on the Annual Report on CFSP

Mr. President, Let me start by warmly thanking the Chair of AFET and Rapporteur, Mr. Brok, for his impressive and comprehensive report. It is a valuable contribution with many good suggestions that we can use as we build the foundations of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, as we have built the foundation of our services. I have always believed that this Parliament and the members of this Parliament have a critical role in ensuring that we have an effective and democratic EU foreign, security and defence policy.

I also believe that in this increasingly challenging economic environment it makes ever more sense for Member States to work together. This holds true for both large and smaller Member States. Let me take just 2 or 3 issues that we face. On Iran, the Middle-East Peace Process, Syria we are stronger and more effective when we work together.

We are building the best possible diplomatic service to meet Europe's needs and the needs of the European citizens. We are attracting some of the best talent from Member States and at the same time we have harnessed the tremendous depth of knowledge and expertise that staff from the European Institutions bring. I pay tribute to all of them. The EEAS is becoming a centre of excellence: a source of ideas, policy and analysis.

The network of EU Delegations is the greatest asset we have. I have been able to open new Delegations in Libya and South Sudan and an office in Burma/Myanmar, that I would like to upgrade. We need to develop this network – we are for example massively underrepresented in the Gulf States.

What makes us different from member states is that we work in a different way. In a way that is unique to the EU.

P R E S S

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

Michael Mann +32 498 999 780 - +32 2 299 97 80 - Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu

Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu

Sebastien Brabant +32 498 986 433 - Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu

COMM-SPP-HRVP-ASHTON@ec.europa.eu

www.eeas.europa.eu

EN

You see that when you look at all the crises that we face. When you look at all the situations in which we are operating they are multi-faceted, complex and particular. In none of them is there a simple solution – political, military or economic. The great strength of the EU, working with member states and international partners, is the range of diplomatic tools at its disposal. By mobilising them all in the appropriate way, we can be more effective at preventing crises, and swifter in resolving them.

- To develop that comprehensive approach we need three things:
- A clear definition of our strategy, bearing in mind the EU's interests;
- We have to have effective coordination of what we do;
- And swift delivery by the EU and member states' networks overseas.

Let me give you two examples:

I went to Mogadishu, Mombasa and Nairobi in August. You know the challenges of this region. I am very pleased that we have the new president elected in circumstances of calm. Our team was in Mogadishu throughout the process. I just spoke to the new President and the former President to congratulate them on the outcome and to tell them that we would remain with them. They asked me to tell you they are grateful for the work we have done over the years to support the people in the region and they look to us to stay with them.

But when we talk to politicians in Mogadishu and in the region we talk about a range of different activities in which we are involved: tackling piracy and enabling the World Food Programme to safely deliver food-aid; bringing peace and stability to the region; supporting democracy and human rights; helping trade to flourish; building infrastructure; counter-terrorism and engaging in support to peace processes and mediation.

We have Operation Atalanta, involving at present 11 Member States working together with ships, planes, helicopters and staff at HQ. This has resulted in the number of successful piracy attacks being reduced from 65 in 2010 to 5 this year so far. And those who are involved in Atalanta are first to say they can tackle the symptoms of the problem at sea but we have to find ways to tackle the issues on the land.

So we have two other missions operating – one the training of soldiers to help and support the security situation around Mogadishu and beyond. I have met the AMISOM force commander who talked about the needs he has as he tries to drive forward and bring peace and security. We also have the operation that will help with maritime security, helping other countries to keep their shore line and the seas free from piracy, which is especially important to countries like Kenya who have seen piracy turning into kidnapping people from the shore. I went to these missions with both admirals and the colonel in charge of them, but I also went with those involved in development, in the humanitarian exercise - to illustrate what we do in a coherent and comprehensive way. When I met with the politicians who were just about to start the elections for the new government, we talked about the range of different ways in which we are involved. The fundamental needs of development as the AMISOM forces move forward. They need help to dig wells; they need help to provide for the people in communities who have suffered 20 years of war, they need help in supporting the move away from crisis, to peace building and mediation. The very brave woman in charge of the electoral commission who talked about the needs to help them build the peace and engage the women of Somalia in doing that.

Mr. President, I have raised the EU flag. It flies in Mogadishu above a very basic place that we have there. No more than a tin roof and tin walls and yet it provides meeting rooms and places for our delegation to be able to be active. It is an important symbol of our comprehensive approach - that we work together right across the Commission services right through our military knowledge and expertise. And another example is through the Task Forces that we have built in supporting countries going through the transition. As Mr. Brok said, the economic challenges are great and for those countries facing transition they are immense. So helping to support the political process where people are allowed the democracy they yearned for, the democracy that they sought, we need to link that too with the capacity that helped support them economically with the jobs for their future, the security for their families, that will make the difference. So in the Task Forces we have brought together people that represent the range of support. Members of this Parliament who have come with us and have engaged with these new parliamentarians, people who even a few weeks before elections were registering their political parties for the first time. People who have never worked out how you build a coalition or indeed how you build a political party that has roots that go deep.

People who need to understand the institutional side of democracy and to work not just for one election but for all the elections to come and I pay tribute to all the members of this Parliament who have engaged with people across the world in doing that. But to bring the resources from the Commission to support the long term development, the instruments of stability, all of those assets that we have and our partners: EIB, EBRD, Africa Bank, the World Bank. All of these institutions who are able to put grants and loans at the disposal of those who need to build sometimes the very basic infrastructure. Coordinated through our EUSR and our delegations, through our services on the ground, so that we are able to translate that into a day when people come together and bring business leaders from across the EU willing to commit to engage and invest. It means we leverage the resources that we have, the several hundred million euros that we have available into billions of euros; in Jordan nearly €3bn and in Tunisia €4bn and make a significant difference to the lives of people. I think that by taking that approach we offer something unique and it translates into how we support those countries that are trying to deal with real challenges of transition. Not just in our Southern Neighbourhood but also to our East.

We have been working closely in the Western Balkans as you know: in Bosnia to try and build this comprehensive approach on the ground, where we are working with many countries who are engaged in BiH and with all the leaders who need to try to push forward the government. With the leadership in Serbia and Kosovo where I have met with PM Thaci with President Nikolic, and PM Dacic. I have said that I will engage myself in driving forward this dialogue. That they need to commit to really wanting to find ways through that will help support the people whose lives are made difficult every day by the on-going tensions and challenges of that area. And I will meet with them again in New York to try and move forward.

Supporting the process of change too as we have described in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, other countries in the Middle East and North Africa requires our continued support and willingness to address the different challenges – on Thursday President of Egypt Mohamed Morsi will arrive in Brussels on his first visit. The new President of Egypt was invited by me when I went to see him in July. He will meet with myself and the President to discuss the latest developments in his country and his role and work in the wider region. We are preparing for him the same kind of injection of economic and political support for the future. But we don't just wait for those moments. In Egypt in July we provided 2 million rural Egyptian women with ID cards, enabling them to access health care, to open bank accounts, to be recognised for themselves. This is the EU in action.

I am appalled by the violence and human rights violations which have occurred in Syria. When I spoke with Mr Brahimi, the new representative, I offered him our full support including from the Delegation we still have on the ground. And in my discussions with the countries surrounding Syria we have offered them additional support and you would have seen an additional 50 million euros that we have given them this weekend.

We remain too committed to the Middle East Peace Process. The goal is a just and lasting two-state solution. We need to make sure that we continue to move forward and recognize the additional challenges that are faced at the moment by PM Fayad and the Palestinian authority in financial terms. I spoke with him on Sunday and we will work together in moving towards New York with the AHLIC and the Norwegian Foreign Minister to try and make sure that the work that has been done which is well recognised by Israel as well as by the World Bank and countries of the region and beyond is not allowed to fail.

We need to understand of course too the needs of Israel. Its deep concern for its own security and also its economic needs. We will continue to find a way through that will bring security for both. But it is increasingly urgent in my view. And I have mentioned in the spirit of that region too the work that we do on Iran and I am very grateful about what Mr Brok said about my role as leader of the negotiations.

I have spent 48 hours in direct negotiations and I have spent an additional of 18 hours in bilateral discussions. I spoke with Dr Jalili, my counterpart, a couple of weeks ago to urge on him the need to make progress and to urge on him the need for us to keep moving on the diplomatic track. The E3+3 will meet in New York. And we will have further contacts. At the same time, as the report reminds us, we must not neglect the broader agenda including human rights and regional security.

Looking East, I have mentioned Serbia, Kosovo and Bosnia. We will continue to monitor closely the situation in Belarus, where the situation regarding human rights and democracy is worrisome. We have a policy of critical engagement, we continue to target those responsible for the crackdown, and those closely associated, with measures and, at the same time, we engage with the people, with civil society and the opposition.

And in Ukraine, where Helga Schmid is meeting today with the opposition party right now we want to see progress on 3 issues: selective justice; to conduct free and fair parliamentary elections on 28 October; and to resume the delayed reforms in the joint EU-Ukraine Association Agenda.

We welcome the fact that Moldova has been moving dynamically within the Eastern partnership and we will also remain actively engaged in the 5+2 talks on a resolution of the Transnistrian issue. Georgia is an important partner for the EU and I am committed to further deepening our relations while also encouraging the consolidation of democracy in Georgia. I have been making clear both to the government including in my last meeting with President Sakashvili this summer, and the opposition what we expect in the upcoming elections in October. We will also continue efforts to develop our relations with Armenia and Azerbaijan on the basis of our values and common interests. I regret the recent decision to pardon Safarov, which went against commitments made by Azerbaijan and which has fuelled tensions in the region. I have expressed together with Commissioner Fuele my concern, and we have been following up on this. Our special representative is currently in the region. I know the parliament will be discussing this on Thursday.

We work in close consultation and co-operation with the United States in our areas of common interest such as especially the Western Balkans, the Southern Neighbourhood and the Asia-Pacific where we met recently with the ASEAN countries, and Secretary Clinton and I held a bilateral on the issues of that region. And we remain in touch with the State Department on a daily basis.

I am also going to speak later on about Russia so I won't say anything further about Russia in this debate in order that we can have a bigger debate later in order to save time. But of course it's critically important that we engage with the people of Russia and that we show we have a strong relationship.

I went to China recently. We have to move forward in trying to develop the Dialogue that we have on regional issues. We agreed our regular dialogue on defence and security policies and we've agreed to strengthen our cooperation on combating piracy.

I've already said that on the work we do on Iran, we work closely with the E3+3, and China is a key partner in this as well as on the fight against piracy. But that's how our relationship with China strengthens; we need to emphasize the importance of universal values and freedoms. During my 9 hours of discussion with State Councillor Dai Bingguo, we had a very long discussion and debate on human rights. I brought that into the dialogue with him as well as the dialogue that we had on human rights as a separate discussion.

And too with India, when we agreed the annual Foreign Policy Consultations, when we have a Security Dialogue and a Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism, and when we cooperate on anti-piracy measures and cyber-security issues. We strengthened that relationship dramatically last year but of course I continue to support a solution working with the Italian government for the two marines on trial in India. And our co-operation with other strategic partners goes on. Canada, Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, Japan and South Korea. Brazil and Mexico are playing an important role in the region, promoting open markets and following the political crisis in Paraguay.

In my visits to Brazil, India and South Africa I have promoted the idea of working together on development, on international issues, using the common interests and values we share. But I have to say we have more to do on this.

And on South Africa I want to say a word on the recent events. Because while I was in Pretoria I was able to offer condolences on behalf of the European Union for the loss of lives at the Marikana mine. Our thoughts are with the families affected at this terrible time.

I discussed the situation in depth with both the Foreign Minister and Minister of Defence. The South African authorities have taken the necessary steps to establish the circumstances which resulted in these tragic events, through a full judicial Commission of inquiry into the incident and an inter-ministerial Committee to provide assistance and support to the families of the deceased.

It would be wrong at this time to speculate, trying to anticipate the findings of the Judicial Commission, but clearly it is important to examine the root causes as well as the precise circumstances of these events. At the same time, we must not neglect in our discussions with South Africa and the region the broader issues, as indicated in Mr. Brok's report.

Honourable Members, there is much more we can do to work closely with regional organizations, with the organizations of the Arab League, the African Union, with ASEAN, with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and with of course the United Nations and its broader role but its role in the regions as well.

We work together closely in the future of Libya with the United Nations, the African Union, Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, an idea that came from me to the Secretary General.

And we have worked closely with organizations, especially the Arab League, on Syria. We have done very practical things to foster this co-operation with the Arab League, for example by equipping a Crisis Room at their Headquarters in Cairo which I will visit to open in November.

We also when we look at all the geographical areas of the world have to remember that many challenges of the world are what we call horizontal, that the potential for crisis and conflicts because of energy, of climate change, of water are very real. At the Gymnich last week, I took the opportunity to talk again with Foreign Ministers about some of these issues. We specifically focused on water and education but it was because I recognized, when we think about the Middle East Peace Process, that water is a final status issue. When we think about what's happening in Central Asia, there are real challenges and difficulties around water. The Sahel, the Nile basin, the Arabian Peninsula, all of these are areas where water plays an incredibly vital role in the potential for conflict. And we need to be engaged with them.

I have spent some time talking about what we have done and intend to do. It is also important to remember "why" we do what we do. We do this to promote and protect human rights and democracy which are the guiding principles of our foreign policy. We exist to serve our citizens to help them be more secure, more able to pursue the lives they want, to give them the right environment and hopefully prosperity and to help others obtain what we have. As I've many times reported a young man in Libya who said "we want what you have every day. You have deep democracy and freedom. "

So let me conclude with a word on our inter-institutional relations. I think we have strengthened the relationships between this Parliament, between Institutions, between our officials, our senior EEAS officials, myself and others, and that we try to respond as quickly and as positively as we can to all requests. I think our information with AFET is better, I think also with the DEVE Committee it is better, and reports and resolutions that are in the Parliament are taken into account.

Thank you for the idea of the EU Special Representative for Human Rights. I was therefore very pleased to be able to appoint Stavros Lambrinidis to that role.

Thank you for the role that you play in the Election Observation Missions which are held out across the world as true examples of a way to work with countries to help support those looking to the future.

I am convinced that we can do more and as we build to our 2013 review of the EEAS Decision I hope that we will be able to show not only what we've achieved but also to give some pointers for what more we need to do.

So thank you to the European Parliament for supporting the service and me over these last years and a special thank you for Mr Brok for his excellent report.