High Representative/Vice President

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Since late 2014, Italy's Federica Mogherini has been the EU's High Representative/Vice President. As the EU's chief diplomat she is charged with shaping and carrying out the EU's foreign and security policy – known as the "Common Foreign and Security Policy" (CFSP) and the 'Common Security and Defence Policy' (CSDP). Read more about the daily work of Federica Mogherini.

Since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty the High Representative is also Vice-President of the European Commission. This allows her to coordinate and ensure coherence in EU foreign policy as the European Commission has important international responsibilities such as trade, development, neighbourhood policy and humanitarian aid.

The combination of these roles is to ensure the consistency and coherence of EU activities in the world and ensure they do not conflict or overlap.

They head the EU's diplomatic corps, the European External Action Service.

What does the High Representative/Vice-President do?

The role is wide-ranging. It involves:

- The overall steering of foreign policy and security policy on behalf of the EU;
- Coordinating the EU’s foreign policy tools – development, trade, neighbourhood policy, humanitarian aid and crisis response in her role as Vice-President of the European Commission;
Building consensus between the 28 EU member states and their respective priorities – including through chairing monthly meetings between EU foreign ministers, defence ministers, trade and development ministers; Attending regular meetings between EU leaders in the European Council; Speaking in debates at the European Parliament on foreign policy and security issues; Representing the EU at international meetings, such as the United Nations; Heading the European Defence Agency and the EU Institute for Security Studies.

Who appoints the High Representative/ Vice-President?

- The European Council, which comprises the heads of state or government of all EU member states, appoints the HR/VP through a 'qualified majority' vote. The President of the Commission must be in agreement with the decision.
- The High Representative also holds the role of Vice-President of the European Commission which is as a body voted on by the European Parliament before taking office.
- The Commissioners are appointed for a five-year term, which is renewable and which coincides with the five-year mandate of the European Commission.

History

The role of 'High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy' was created by the Treaty of Amsterdam, which entered into force in 1999. A decade later, the Treaty of Lisbon expanded the role, adding significant new responsibilities. Called from that point onwards the 'High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy', the post was also extended to include the role of Vice-President of the Commission.

On the same day that the Treaty of Lisbon took effect – 1 December 2009 – the expanded position of High Representative/Vice-President was officially inaugurated and the first person to hold the position – Catherine Ashton – started her mandate.

Former High Representatives

Catherine Ashton

2009-2014: High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission
The role was created under the Lisbon Treaty and the UK's Catherine Ashton was the first HR/VP to be appointed under the new Treaty.

**Javier Solana**


The role was created under the Treaty of Amsterdam and Spain's [Javier Solana](#) was appointed to this post by the European Council.

**See also**

Website of HRVP Federica Mogherini
www.eeas.europa.eu

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