

Foreign Policy

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"We already speak with conviction and clarity on the major challenges that face us, be they climate change, poverty, conflict or terrorism. We are the biggest provider of humanitarian aid and project funding. We are a superpower economy with half a billion people but are still accused of not punching our weight politically...My job is to make our voice stronger and more unified still. As underlined in the European Security Strategy, the European Union should become a more capable, more coherent and more strategic global actor. I will build on the work that has gone before to achieve that goal."

– Catherine Ashton

EU Foreign Affairs & Security Policy High Representative/European Commission Vice President

The European Union increasingly speaks with one voice in foreign policy matters. Although the individual EU Member States still retain their own foreign policies, the EU provides a platform from which the Member States can more persuasively advocate their common agenda. In international negotiations the EU is represented as an entity, for example in the Mideast Quartet (EU, US, UN & Russia) dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Asserting the EU's New Role in the World

The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) was established in 1993 when the Treaty of the European Union took effect. It aims to safeguard the common values, fundamental interests, independence and integrity of the Union; to strengthen the security of the Union; to preserve peace and strengthen international security; to promote international co-operation; and to develop and consolidate democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The policy calls for adherence to the UN Charter in accomplishing these goals.

In 1999, EU leaders agreed upon a common European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) within the overall framework of the CFSP to develop capacities to undertake security-related operations, such as peacekeeping, monitoring and conflict prevention. Since 2003, some dozen ESDP operations have been launched and the peacekeeping forces from Member States under the EU flag have been deployed, for example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the Republic of Congo.

From the very beginning, one of the central aims of European integration has been securing peace in Europe. In that respect, enlargement has been one of the most successful EU policies. The Union has progressively extended its zone of peace and democracy across the European continent. In 2004, the EU also launched a European Neighborhood Policy, inviting countries bordering the Union to share in the peace, stability and prosperity enjoyed in the EU.

European Union Delegation, Washington, DC, Staff

USEFUL Links:

European Commission Websites

- EU Foreign Affairs & Security Policy High Representative Catherine Ashton's Website
- European Commission Vice President Catherine Ashton's Website
- European External Action Service (EEAS)
- EU Enlargement Directorate General
- EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn
- EU in the World
- EU Delegations
- EU External Relations & Foreign Affairs Portal

Key Issues

- EU/US Relations
- Transatlantic Relations under the New Obama Administration
- European Perspectives on the New American Foreign Policy Agenda:

On November 20, 2008 the European Union Institute for Security Studies released a report on EU-US foreign policy priorities (European perspectives on the new American foreign policy agenda), which analyzes priorities for EU-US cooperation and puts forward recommendations on areas where the EU can engage with the new American administration.

- EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)
- European Security & Defense Policy (ESDP)
- European Neighborhood Policy
- EU Sanctions
- EU & the Kimberley Process (Conflict Diamonds); Hot Topic
- EU/Russia & Eastern Europe Hot Topic

Overviews

- EU/US Relations Overview (PowerPoint)
- EU Insight: The EU and the United Nations: Multilateral Responses to Global Challenges

- The EU & the US: Global Partners, Global Responsibilities
- EU Focus: European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP): Working for a Safer World
- EU Focus: The EU and Peacekeeping: Promoting Security, Stability, and Democratic Values
- EU Insight: Battling Modern-Day Piracy off the Coast of Somalia: The European Union's Operation Atalanta
- EU Focus: The European Neighborhood Policy: Creating a Ring of Friends Surrounding Europe
- EU Focus: The EU & Latin America/Caribbean
- Asia Hot Topic
- Counterterrorism Hot Topic
- Enlargement Hot Topic
- Human Trafficking Hot Topic
- Mideast Hot Topic
- Visa Waiver Reciprocity Hot Topic
- Enlargement Press Pack
- EU External Relations Activities
- EU Foreign & Security Policy Activities
- EU External Relations Legislative Summaries
- EU Foreign & Security Policy Legislative Summaries
- EU External Relations Legislation
- EU Common Foreign & Security Policy Legislation
- EU Election Observation Missions: European Parliament
- EU Election Observation Missions: EuropeAid
- Publications

Institutions

- Council of the European Union
- Common Foreign & Security Policy (CFSP)
- EU Common Foreign & Security Policy High Representative Javier Solana
- European Security & Defense Policy (ESDP)

- ESDP News
- EU ESDP Operations

- European Defense Agency (EDA)
- EU Institute for Security Studies (ISS-EU)
- EU Satellite Centre (EUSC)
- EU Network & Information Security Agency (ENISA)