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Transcript

TIME TO UPGRADE EU FOREIGN POLICY

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DANIEL KEOHANE: Good evening, everyone. Welcome to Carnegie Europe for tonight's discussion on upgrading EU foreign policy. My name is Daniel Keohane. I'm the research director at FREDA, which is a foreign affairs think-tank based in Madrid and Brussels. It's a real pleasure for me to moderate this discussion, partly because I think this is an excellent time to have this debate. The Ukraine crises along with other external events are pushing foreign policy up the political agenda, certainly higher than it was, say, five years ago, at the very moment when Europeans are about to select a new leadership for the institutions, the new institutions here in Brussels.

I think we're very fortunate to have two excellent speakers this evening to discuss all of these issues. Stefan Lehne will be our first speaker. Stefan is a visiting scholar here at Carnegie. He's presenting his new paper on why this is the time to upgrade EU foreign policy and there are copies available for anyone who wants one. Stefan, of course, has long experience of international policymaking having been both an Australian diplomat and also an EU official working for the previous High Representative, Javier Solana.

And to respond to Stefan we have David O'Sullivan, who's the Chief Operating Officer of the European External Action Service. I think David doesn't really need an introduction. I think he's well known to our Brussels audience, having previously held a number of senior positions in the European Commission, and of course he's shortly to become our man in Washington DC.

The speakers have agreed not to speak for more than 15 minutes and of course there will be time afterwards for Q&A for all of you to join in the discussion. Without further ado – I should mention also, the discussion is on the record – let me hand the floor to Stefan to explain to us why now is the time to upgrade EU foreign policy.

STEFAN LEHNE: Thank you very much, Daniel. Actually this is probably the shortest paper I've written for Carnegie so far because it's about a really simple issue. It is about a challenge and response. The challenge is, of course, the deteriorating situation in the east and in the south, and the response the two institutional decisions that we're going to take in the next few months; the nomination of a new leadership team and the recomposition of the composition.

External challenges have always been a big stimulus to EU foreign policy development. The whole thing started in the Balkans. It was the inability to bring the bloodshed in Bosnia and in Croatia to an end and the humiliation felt about the dependence on US leadership that prompted the EU to take foreign policy slightly more seriously. A few years ago in 2011 one might have expected the Arab Spring could be a similar stimulus but at the time the EU was stuck in some kind of existential fight with the financial markets so it decided not to rise to the challenge basically.

Of course, we found one or two additional billions, we reviewed the neighbourhood policy, we deployed several diplomatic missions but we did not really do enough to become a real anchor of stability for the region and we're now paying the price because I think the turmoil is going on, stability is declining and the challenges will come back.

Now I think the Ukraine challenge is of a different order. Whereas in Syria and Libya it started out as a local power struggle that developed major international implications, in the Ukraine the EU was in the midst of things from the very beginning. It was the prospect of a closer association of Ukraine to the EU which promoted the anger of Moscow. The Euromaidan movement that overthrew the Yanukovich regime waved blue flags of the European Union and Putin's action in the Crimea and also in Eastern Ukraine is meant to basically stop this European prospect.

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So we didn't want a geopolitical fight with Russia. I think we were playing a positive-sum game and we meant that in support for these countries in becoming more rule-of-law-minded and more democratic, economically more prosperous would be in the interests of all neighbours of Russia as much as the EU. But Putin played a zero-sum game. He felt that every step these countries took towards the EU would be a setback to his efforts for a consolidated zone of influence.

So without wanting it, we ended in a geopolitical struggle and this is very different from other EU crisis management efforts. These were about strengthening stability, reducing risk. This is about winning or losing, or maybe it's about not losing, at least. Of course, this means a challenge of a totally different magnitude but, as I said, I believe if you look at the next five-year period maybe the challenges from the south will actually be the more serious. I think we are in between waves. The transformation of the Arab world is far from over. New waves and new explosions will come, EU interests will still be at stake and we're still sorely underequipped to deal with these problems.

Then in my paper I take a brief look at where we are now with our instruments, with the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty. In my mind, there are many positive things that can be said. There's much more continuity, there's more professionalism, I believe. In some respects there's also more coherence between external relations and CFSB. I think the fact that the EU delegations took on the role of the presidency is a huge step forward.

But I also see two big deficits. One is coherence. I think the promise that we would really be able to pull together the external competencies that are basically run by the Commission and CFSB behind a joint coherent external action; that hasn't come true. Article 18 of the treaty says very clearly that the High Representative/Vice-President is in charge of ensuring the consistency of the external action and is in charge of coordinating the Commissioners dealing with the external relations. This hasn't happened. I think President Barroso did not allow Cathy Ashton to take this role and neither, I think, did she very much fight for it because she was really overwhelmed with other tasks that she had anyway. So this is, I think, a huge, huge deficit.

The second one is the deficit of leadership. I think many people had hoped that the External Action Service and its leadership would be capable of giving guidance to the overall system to identify options to drive this forward in a credible way. I think this has happened on very few issues; Kosovo-Serbia dialogue is one clear point; the Iran dialogue is another one. But very often it has not happened. Basically the real leadership in EU foreign policy remains of an informal kind with the big countries and it sometimes works when they agree and when they are interested; it often doesn't. And altogether I think we don't have enough of a drive, we don't have any more the energy and ambition of the six-monthly rotation of the presidency and sometimes I have the sense that the External Action Service has the tendency to avoid really tough and controversial issues.

Of course, we all thought that the ES review would be a wonderful occasion to tackle some of the design faults of the system and to improve things. I am among the 10,000 think-tankers who have written papers on the External Action Service review but also I think many member states submitted proposals and the European Parliament adopted a very substantive position. Cathy Ashton herself, I think, in the end after some hesitation came up with a fairly substantive piece of paper with 35 proposals for changes and improvements. But when the subject was discussed in the Council structures – and David was a key player in this process – it quickly turned out that there is really little prospect for a fundamental review at this stage.

I think one must say the main reason probably was bad timing so such a short time after the establishment of the External Action Service many felt it wasn't [unclear] to really assess the

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functioning of the new system and draw firm conclusions. Also I think towards the end of the institutional period there was no appetite to reopen the kind of institutional fights that had taken place at the time of the negotiation of the decision. Most member states, I think, supported the thrust of Cathy Ashton's report but all of them almost had some exceptional points on which they didn't agree and if you took all these reservations together you ended up with very little. The Council conclusions of December basically – their only operational outcome was to postpone the review until the year 2015.

So that was a disappointment but I think the disappointment was partly due to bad timing and partly due to the fact that the process took place in an institutional bubble basically, where the outside world doesn't really intrude and people operate on the basis of institutional interests and procedural considerations. But I believe now that there is a new chance, a new opportunity and that opportunity is either in the election of the new leadership team of the European Union in the next few months and then the recomposition of the Commission.

As you know, this is a package deal again. Very likely it's going to be a package deal. The last time the focus was fully on the identification of the President of the Commission. Then they looked at who would be a good President of the European Council and then the selection of the High Representative was a balancing operation where you ticked many boxes; gender, east, west, big, small, etc, etc. I very much hope this is not going to happen the same way this time.

For me it's surprising. If you really look at the institutional powers of the High Representative, she's unbelievably powerful. I think in institutional terms she's more powerful than the President of the Commission or individual Commissioners because in terms of hiring and firing and shaping the basic structures of the External Action Service she basically has full powers. It's not necessarily the most brilliant system; maybe she has too many powers; but that is the year's decision.

So this is absolutely a crucial decision to take and given the environment in which we live I think it's absolutely essential that one would go for a heavyweight, a very experienced person, someone who can take on this kind of leadership role that was not quite there in the last few months.

Finally on the recomposition of the Commission, I do think that the Commission is in a paradoxical situation. On the one hand it gained very important new powers controlling the budgets and ensuring financial responsibilities. On the other hand, it really lost count in terms of political leadership of European integration. There are many explanations for that; the rise of the European Council as the central body of the EU; the overall skepticism towards the EU that really impacts very much on the images of the European Commission, of course. But I think the size of the Commission is also a major factor. There are many more Commissioners now than there are competencies. The college of 28 is not fit as a body for having a substantive debate. Therefore decision-making has morphed into some kind of presidential system where the President of the Commission, the Commissioner in charge of a dossier together are the key players.

And most Commissioners feel very much representatives of the country they know best basically, which is totally contrary to what the Commission's supposed to be. In my paper I proposed – but I pick up ideas that have been around for a long time – a clustering of the Commission where you have about five to seven clusters of related items with a Vice-President in charge of each of these clusters, Vice-Presidents that would be not just honorific positions but would have real clout. They should be able, for instance, to control the agenda of the Commission and Commissioners should only be able to put something on the agenda of the Commission as a whole with the agreement of the Vice-

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President. I think this would provide a lot more strategic thinking, continuity and better preparation of dossiers and a greater coherence.

I think this is an ambitious concept. It has been tried before, it might not work again. I believe – and this is the point I make in my paper – in external relations it's necessary to do it and Article 18 basically commands this to happen. I would believe if you have the High Representative/Vice-President chairing on a regular basis a committee of external relations Commissioners, to which I think one would also have to associate people with internal competencies with an important external dimension, such as energy, if you have a real hierarchy among these people you could, for the first time, really pool these vast resources and instruments together in a credible fashion.

I think I would, by the same stroke, also solve the question of deputies. I think the Commissioners who would then, in a way, work for the Vice-President, High Representative should be compensated by some of them becoming also deputy High Representatives, which can be done very simply through a decision of the Council. We could have, for instance, a Commissioner who would be in charge of this other neighbourhood and who would also be the deputy High Representative for these regions, the same for the east. And maybe the Development Commissioner could take such a leading political role with regard to Africa. I think thereby you get both more coherence and more leadership.

I think that there is a huge challenge out there. These decisions happen only every five years so this is a real opportunity in the coming months. I think it's an opportunity we cannot afford to miss. Thank you very much.

DANIEL KEOHANE: Thank you, Stefan, and I think you outlined very well the deficits that the institutions face. I was struck by your comparison between the High Representative and the Commission President, that the High Rep has so much authority. Of course. The High Rep might argue that she has very little money to do all the things that perhaps she would like to do but I think your ideas on having a political heavyweight, your clusters; I think they're very sensible ways forward. But, David, what do you think of the Lehne plan for upgrading EU foreign policy?

DAVID O'SULLIVAN: Well, Daniel, Stefan, colleagues, thank you very much for this opportunity to comment on Stefan's paper. I'd like to thank Stefan. You and a number of people have been the greatest supporters of the External Action Service and produced many thoughtful pieces, sometimes critical of us but, I always felt – and I feel it again in this paper – critical because you have ambitions for what we're trying to do and I think this paper is no exception.

Of course, the title is drawing on the IT world; time to upgrade EU foreign policy. I noted that President Barroso in his speech in Humboldt University talked about Europe 3.0 so this seems to be the mood of the moment, that we're using IT terminology.

On the other hand, you talk about the window of opportunity and I can tell you from my Geneva DDA days, I'm extremely nervous about anyone who suggests that there's a window of opportunity because we had more windows of opportunity to close the door around and I'm afraid the windows all remained firmly open and never closed. But I think you are actually right.

I thank you for what you say in the paper and the positive comments you make and I think we have managed to achieve a certain amount, though I'm always very modest about what's been achieved because I'm conscious that there is so much more to do. Where I think I disagree, to be honest with you – and this is perhaps a subject for the audience as well – I think we're over-imagining what foreign policy delivers. When you say we failed in the Arab Spring, what did you expect us to do, what did

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anyone? By the way, nobody saw it coming. When we first arrived in the External Action Service in January of 2011 we were faced with this Arab Spring. At that stage we were just setting up the organisation and lots of things were going wrong and we had all kinds of problems.

I used to get regular phone calls from journalists who would like to say, well, what's the External Action Service done this week? One of the first criticisms was, well, you didn't see the Arab Spring coming, did you? To which I replied, no, and neither did anybody else. But we somehow had to carry responsibility for not having spotted it. Then we were blamed for the fact that we didn't transform it into a huge opportunity to turn North Africa into a haven of liberal democracy, human rights and prosperity. But actually the people of North Africa had some other ideas.

And I think running through some of this is, we also have to take into account that people make choices and it's not all driven by foreign policy, it's not all driven by what the US or the EU would like people to do and I don't think that you can necessarily say that it's a failure when people decide to go in a different direction because I think there's a limit to how far you can influence events and you can dictate how things go.

I think you're absolutely right that Ukraine is of a qualitatively different nature and it's not even Ukraine. I'm afraid it's the EU-Russian relationship which is at stake here and I absolutely agree with you that this is a qualitatively different challenge; very worrying, I have to say. I think there is a risk that we could be facing a protracted period of conflict with Russia over the neighbourhood but over other issues and I don't quite know how we extricate ourselves from that and how we find a way forward. This is certainly going to have a dramatic influence on the conduct of the next five years of foreign policy.

But I also think that some of the – and you comment very favourably on the much-quoted – and since they're Cathy's successes I must also quote them – the Serbia-Kosovo dialogue and Iran. But I also think, to be honest, if you look at Africa policy we've done quite well in the last four years. We just had a very successful EU Africa summit. We've had ups and downs in different regions but actually I think the EU has intervened well even in follow-up to military and civilian operations in Mali, in Central African Republic and in other crisis areas; also in the anti-piracy area.

Again, what do you call a success in foreign policy? Perhaps that could be the theme of this evening. But I think we have actually – and for me Africa is our extended neighbourhood, we need to look at Africa also as part of our neighbourhood and not just as another foreign policy challenge and I do believe that if we do not take particularly the security situation in Africa seriously nobody else will. But I think we've done very good work with the African Union and I repeat, the summit was, I think, a very good success. We've even, from a trade perspective, managed to make progress on the infamous EPA discussions and look like closing out some of those negotiations.

I also would submit that if you look at Asia in fact we have made some progress. I don't want to necessarily call it a success because again I'm not sure what's a foreign policy success but I think where we are with China, the visit of Xi Jinping, where we are with Japan, the visit of Prime Minister Abe and the fact that we've considerably broadened our relationship with China including in the security field, where we are with ASIAN [?]. So I think there is a tendency in commenting on foreign policy always to see it in terms of today's crisis. Foreign policy is actually about building very painstakingly and slowly a network of relationships and shared interests and the capacity to influence and sometimes you get it right, sometimes you get it wrong and sometimes you're able to influence and sometimes you're not.

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I think you're absolutely right when you say in Ukraine – I don't actually think it's our fault. I know there are people who say and would like to say we've made mistakes. Honestly, we have made mistakes in other areas. I'm not sure we have made any particular mistakes in this area. I think Russia just changed its view of the world and how it wanted to behave and then we have to adjust to that and we'll have to see.

So I think we have laid the basis over the last four years and you rightly say that one of Cathy's achievements is also the legacy of the service. She inherited – and Paul Kristofferson [?] knows this better than most – when she first arrived the Treaty said she was assisted by a service but there wasn't a service so the first thing she had to do was build the service which was meant to assist her. That actually took up a huge amount of time and energy and that legacy she gives to her successor, not that I would claim that she's handing over the Rolls Royce of international diplomacy but it's a fairly modest – will I say an Audi or is it a Volkswagen or...? I'll stop there.

I was once driving with Peter Mandelson in Geneva during one of the negotiations and he liked to drive a Jaguar and it broke down and I said, well, that's what happens when you drive an Indian car. But I think she hands her successor a functioning machine which can certainly be improved and definitely can be improved but the successor does not have to reinvent the wheel, doesn't have to create it from scratch.

On the review, I agree with you; I think it was just bad timing. I think most people agreed with many of the suggestions but nobody wanted to touch the legislative basis and for those of you who experienced the negotiations in 2010, frankly I think nobody wanted to go back there before the institutional reset and that's what happened. So basically, as the Americans would say – I have to get used to speaking like this maybe – they kicked the can down the road and basically we have a review 2.0 in 2015 for her successor. But the work is there, the elements are there and it'll be fairly simple, I think, if there's a political willingness to pick up those elements and take them forward.

Of course, whether the obstacles which prevented those issues from being satisfactorily resolved the first time round have disappeared will be the big question and that, of course, takes you to the question of political will and how far member states actually want to – I won't say communitarise because I know that would cause many people to choke on their sparkling water this evening, but to pool foreign policy at European level, to pool sovereignty on foreign policy at European level.

Let's face it, many of the problems stem from the fact that we haven't made up our mind, we are ambivalent. We would like an active, strong European foreign policy but we'd also like to retain the possibility for individual countries to have their own brand of diplomacy. And that's not just the larger member states; sure, they're the ones with global reach and they're interested in every problem. But it goes to the smallest of member states who also want to hold onto their particular concerns or national identities expressed through foreign policy, whether this is neutrality or a great concern for human rights or development assistance or a regional issue in which they're heavily engaged. So it's a common problem.

We know we're more effective when we work together but we can't quite manage the step of actually saying, I'm going to submerge my national interest in order to take forward a greater European interest, which is what we have succeeded in other areas such as trade or even now increasingly economic policy. I think the moment will come but I think it will come slowly and it will take a bit of time.

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On the last point, your comments on the Commission, I suppose I should have a conflict of interest or not even dare to comment on these issues since I'm no longer part of the Commission and it'll be up to the President. I think that the clusters idea was first mentioned in the Commission's submission to the convention back in 2002 or 2003. I think it has many merits. Whether it will succeed or not I don't know. Where I agree with you however is that I think whether the next President chooses to generalise the practice of clusters or not, I think you do need an external relations cluster chaired by the High Representative/Vice-President. I think we all recognise that that is perhaps the bit of Cathy's new responsibilities which it has proven challenging to implement, partly because there were so many other things to do, to be honest with you, but also because she joined a moving train which was the Barroso Commission that was already there and it was Barroso II and of course, the habits were in place and it was not easy to change them.

I hope that that can be changed and that the High Representative/Vice-President will be given a reinforced capacity to mould all aspects of European policy with an external dimension to a common vision of what we're trying to achieve and I think some kind of clustering around the High Representative/Vice-President is probably important. I note, by the way, that in President Barroso's speech he also touches on this.

There's also the issue of deputies, of course, which is a vexed issue, much easier to imagine in terms of Commissioners being deputies; much more complicated to imagine how you deputise on the CFSB side. You can either use the slightly bureaucratic route of the Secretary-General of the service and say that that's a semi-political Secretary of State-type figure but, to be honest with you, that doesn't play well particularly with the Parliament and elsewhere and probably not with the High Representative/Vice-President, who might not want to feel that their leading civil servant plays a political role.

But trying to imagine nominating political figures also is complicated. That's why it wasn't done the first time round and that's why it's still, I think, a bit of a challenge to imagine how you might solve it. But it's probably not impossible to solve but I think it will not be easy.

So I thank you very much, Stefan, for, as ever, an extremely thoughtful and thought-provoking piece. I think there's some very good ideas in there. I think this is a moment of institutional reset, it is a window of opportunity to define ambition for external relations but, as ever, I fear events, dear boy, events; we don't know what's around the corner. We didn't know when the Arab Spring was coming; we didn't know that Vilnius and Ukraine was coming and probably – I hate to say it – there are some surprises coming for us in the autumn and into next year which we don't even know about now and in a year's time somebody will be sitting here saying, and the EAS didn't predict that crisis; because I don't think anyone has the power fully to predict the course of world events. If the Ukraine crisis teaches us anything, unfortunately, it's that history is not linear. It may even be dangerously circular at times but that's all I'll say for the moment. Thank you.

DANIEL KEOHANE: Great, thank you very much and I think there's two things in particular I would take from what you said, David, but I think there's a very important point and for me it's one of the big lessons of the last few years, not just in the EU's response to the Arab Spring or Ukraine or whatever, indeed others as well; just how limited foreign policy actually is in practice. We shouldn't overestimate what foreign policies can achieve and we shouldn't, of course, overestimate what the EU can achieve. We're not talking about a super-state here.

But then there is another question which I'd like to put to both of you because, on the other hand, sometimes the EU appears more like a politically-correct power than a geopolitical one. You identified

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the problem that even with the best institutions in the world you still have the issue of the member state alignment. Could you maybe say a bit more about that, how we might try and improve that? Maybe if you want to start, Stefan.

STEFAN LEHNE: Yes.

DANIEL KEOHANE: I know, obviously you've written about...

STEFAN LEHNE: I think what you have with the new system is a certain deficit of ownership by the member states. The member states, in a way, were more comfortable with the rotating presidency. There was a peer system, there was a certain degree of solidarity and I think with the member states and the External Action Service you have – I mentioned ambivalence; you said the same thing – basically it's an ambivalent relationship. On the one hand you see that you have support for this common instrument up to a point but up to a point you also see it as a potential rival.

I talked to a young Austrian colleague who said, well, if this really works out I'll never be Ambassador. So I think in every foreign ministry you have people who have somehow some feelings of angst regarding the External Action Service and they also see it to some extent as a threat so basically the attitude of member states is a mixed one.

The way to respond to that is, of course, to emphasise teamwork. I think the External Action Service has 3,600 people. The member states together have 50,000 diplomats roughly so if you can even use a fraction of this collective capacity and put it at the service of the common objective of foreign policy you will get enormous gains in terms of effectiveness and this needs to happen on the level of delegations where you can really have, I think, much more developed teamwork between the embassies and the delegations. This is happening in many places. In other places it's more difficult but I think more can be done.

I think also the High Representative could use more actively ministers to give them tasks, to send them on missions, to give them mandates to deal with certain things. Of course, one has to be careful that this remains under control and the External Action Service doesn't outsource foreign policy forever to certain member states. But I think you can do more in building a sense of ownership and teamwork by the member states and to get them to identify more with this common project than happens at the present time.

This is my final sentence; somebody told me that it's a bit like the External Action Service has wavered between the goal of being teamwork with the member states and being a proud, strong institution doing its own stuff so it's gone from one to the other. This person told me that in the end the External Action Service decided to be a team with the big member states and a stuff institution with the smaller ones. That is the perception and that is not a very healthy one.

DANIEL KEOHANE: David, would you like to comment on that?

DAVID O'SULLIVAN: Yes. I don't quite agree.

DANIEL KEOHANE: Oh, good.

DAVID O'SULLIVAN: When I talked about ambivalence I didn't talk about ambivalence vis a vis the EAS. I talked about – we're not sure what kind of union we want and we're not sure how much

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foreign and security policy's a part of that union. Some people still haven't figured out whether it's NATO rather than the EU or whatever so that's my point fundamentally.

You're right, of course; there is a certain amount of ambivalence towards the External Action Service but I actually think that we've worked rather well with the member states. I think the delegations work very well locally with the member states. I have to say, I travel around a lot, I meet regularly with the secretaries-general of the foreign ministries. Maybe they say different things to you but what I get from them is actually – because every six months we have meetings of the secretaries-general of the foreign ministries and what they all do is a quick sondage with their different embassies and say, how's it going with the EAS, up or down? And the tendency has always been positive and the positive response rate about the cooperation locally between the EAS and member state embassies is, I would say – I don't know – somewhere between 60 and 70% positive so I think that works well.

Take one example, 21st February when the Foreign Affairs Council was meeting here to decide sanctions against Yanukovich in response to the violence used against the demonstrators and you had the three foreign ministers in Kiev discussing, trying to broker a deal between Yanukovich and the opposition. Some people said, oh, this showed that it was member states rather than Cathy Ashton. Cathy Ashton was chairing the Foreign Affairs Council, the official decision-making body of the European Union, which could take the legal decision for the sanctions which brought Yanukovich to the table where the three ministers were then able, more or less in real time, tick-tacking backwards and forwards between Brussels and Kiev and on the phone with Cathy very regularly, to produce a package result which of course, unfortunately then, as we know, fell apart, which shows the limits of foreign policy again.

But for me that demonstrates the kind of synergy and Cathy does regularly ask ministers to do things on her behalf and so I think that works. So I think my point is that it's not vis a vis the External Action Service or whether the Action Service is more or less loved by the member states. I think the fundamental ambiguity is what kind of Europe do we want and how much sovereignty do we want to pool in this area of foreign and security policy? That's the point and the answer is, I think we've made – I began life with European political cooperation – you may remember that, Bul [?]. When I compare where we are now compared to the days of political cooperation back in the 70s, it's from the stone age to the nuclear age.

But unfortunately other people have invented fusion and we haven't got there yet so the rest of the world is moving even faster than we are and that's our challenge, that no matter how quickly we move and improve our capacity to speak with one voice and to act, unfortunately the rest of the world is moving faster and we always risk to look as if we're being a bit left behind. That, I think, is something that we need to continue to discuss with the member states but member states need to discuss with their people because this is ultimately an issue of legitimacy and of transfer of further sovereignty, which needs to be done in a way that can be sold to national parliaments and to the population at large.

DANIEL KEOHANE: Great. I'd like to open it up for Q&A, comments from the audience. Please identify yourself first of all, catch my attention by raising your hand and also please try and keep the comments and questions to a reasonable length so that we can give everyone who wants to join in a chance to do so. We have about 40 minutes and I'll start here. If you can use the microphone as well please so that everyone can hear you.

SVETLANA KOBZER: Thank you very much. My name is Svetlana Kobzer [?]. I'm from REN Europe and Vesalius College. One of the issues you touched upon is difficulty of predicting crisis. I

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think everyone agrees with that but one of the components of predicting crisis is risk analysis. My question is about the level of trust; in your view, especially having served in a diplomatic career for some time in the EU, how has the level of trust developed within the EU with enlargement and what kind of risk analysis capacity does the EU have and also how does it engage its neighbours? Because data and risk analysis are also so linked to the partners. Thank you very much.

DANIEL KEOHANE: Okay, we'll take a few. This gentleman was next.

MICHAEL SWAN: Thanks very much; Michael Swan, working for the EAS. You touched on the question of what kind of Europe we want. I was just wondering; foreign ministries in member states around the world tend to be bastions of conservatism and I wonder now when we talk about upgrading EU foreign policy whether, almost without us realising it, we're prone to the wish just to slow things down, consolidate after this tremendous change in the creation of the EAS.

In the UK there was this big push a few years ago to make foreign policy much more representative of the country that is behind so more black, younger and more women. I wonder whether this is the time for a big push forwards to keep up momentum in upgrading. Thanks.

DANIEL KEOHANE: Actually I want to add something to that point about foreign ministries because generally now, of course, the trend in many national capitals is that it's the chancelleries or the Prime Minister's offices that really are ultimately decisive. You didn't say much, Stefan, about the European Council and the relationship with the European Council. Maybe you could say something about that as well.

STEFAN LEHNE: Sure.

DANIEL KEOHANE: I'll take another question from Stephen, please. Please identify yourself, Stephen.

STEPHEN DIFFER: I'm Stephen Differ [?]. I also work for the EAS and I'm therefore reluctant to speak because I think it should not be [?] internal but maybe a question for Stefan. Think-tank-land at the moment talks about the return of geopolitics and our mutually admired Robert Cooper spoke earlier about the world being divided into modern, postmodern and premodern. Sometimes we conceived of ourselves as a Europe that would do the postmodern normative role but do you agree with the thesis that the kind of challenge we face with Russia but maybe also with China and other places – that this is a world maybe of economic interdependence but geopolitical rivalry, do you agree analytically with that point?

And if you do, how relevant are clusters in the Commission and other ideas that you have for enhancing our effectiveness? Isn't it more an analytical, mental shift that we need rather than an organisational shift inside the Commission?

DANIEL KEOHANE: I'll just give our two speakers a chance to respond to these. We'll go in reverse order, if that's okay. David, would you mind going first?

DAVID O'SULLIVAN: Yes, sure. Risk analysis; yes, we've done quite a lot of work on this because we inherited a number of mechanisms from risk analysis from the network we have with the member states' intelligence centre, work being done by the policy unit so we have tried to pool all this together into a single tool which enables us to use fairly conventional analytical tools to try to identify risk. I

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think you have to do it and I think it does tell you a certain amount of things but I think there are also limits to it, to be honest with you.

In terms of trust, look; I think there's a high degree of trust amongst member states and I'm always astounded at how much effort people make trying to keep unity. It sometimes comes at the price of the effectiveness of the position because, of course, by definition it's a position which accommodates a number of different views. But I continue to believe that when you look at the trend the pressure is always ultimately to try and maintain a common position and to find a common position and it takes a lot of time because when you want to do it by unanimity with 28 countries it's hugely labour-intensive.

But I think, of course, you've only to look at the discussion which we may have to face about stage three sanctions against Russia to see that it's not just a question of trust but it's a question of objective, different economic interests which come into play and which will not be easy to reconcile. But I suspect that if we ever get into that situation in fact we will find a way forward.

On the question of foreign ministries, there's an awful lot that could be said. You're right, Daniel, as well; there's an existential question of foreign ministries. Those of us who started out life in that profession know how difficult it is. What does diplomacy mean in the 21st Century, what does it mean when world leaders have each other's text numbers and can speak directly on the phone at any stage, what's an ambassador doing compared to the days when it took two months for a piece of paper to go from Beijing to Paris or London?

Whether the EAS should be – this was Cathy's idea and I think she's right, that somehow the EAS should be at the forefront of being a more modern organisation. We come with an awful lot of baggage, we're not something which was started from scratch so we inherit even the issue which I fully share of greater female presence at senior level. When you look at the ratio we inherited from the Commission and the Council and then you look at the pool when we're recruiting from member states, you look at the gender balance, it's not surprising we have a gender balance problem. Should we find new and innovative ways of overcoming that? Perhaps but it's not easy if you are working with systems which are already full of a certain amount of bias.

On Stephen's point, geopolitical; yes, I think that what has happened on Ukraine is a game-changer for me, yes, I think it is, frankly. Of course, one has to be careful saying that because six months later it may not look that way but for me it feels that way, yes. This is a very dramatic change in diplomatic security arrangements in Europe, we don't know exactly in what way. I think that must cause us to rethink but I don't think that's different, I think the mechanics of how Europe operates its foreign policy are still important. The one thing we know from European integration in the past is that it's not just a question of having a political idea, it's finding the articulation, the mechanical way of making that idea work, whether it was the Single Act which brought in qualified majority voting on harmonisation of legislation across the internal market or other institutional innovations.

This is why I think building the EAS, creating the role of High Representative/Vice-President; the role, probably to be further developed, of the President of the European Council in common foreign and security policy at his or her level, as the treaty says; the question of using new institutional devices to try to drive more of the coherence and the consistency of policy between what's being done on the community side or the Union side and the CFSB side; I think these are mechanisms that are important. But you're right, the bigger question is always there and I think that's the point I tried to make; you have to then decide, to what end do you want to put these instruments?

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I personally think that not only has Mr Putin single-handedly revived NATO, revived the OSCE, I suspect that four or five years from now we will look back and say that actually Mr Putin achieved the direct opposite of what he wanted, which is to somehow undermine the EU or what he sees as the EU's Eastern march. I think he may find that what he's actually done is also given a whole new impetus to a common foreign and security policy.

DANIEL KEOHANE: David, if I could just press you on that – and maybe you'll want to take on this as well, Stefan – it is true that you do get a sense – at least I do – that the Ukraine crisis has certainly given NATO a reinvigoration or an appearance of reinvigoration. Why is it you don't get the same sense of energy on the EAS side or on the EU side?

STEFAN LEHNE: To some extent...

DAVID O'SULLIVAN: Have we stopped beating our wife is going to be the next question.

STEFAN LEHNE: I was in Washington last week and I had to give a talk about the Ukraine with lots of US diplomats and I realised that on some level these people are incredibly happy because they've been socialised in the bipolar mindset.

DAVID O'SULLIVAN: Exactly, absolutely.

STEFAN LEHNE: And they're hugely comforted that finally they can again deal in this kind of constellation that they know and it's much easier than solving Syria.

DAVID O'SULLIVAN: Is it, though? [Overtalking].

STEFAN LEHNE: In a way, unfortunately what this kind of return to the past in terms of the bipolar mechanism means is that also the EU is a little bit pushed into the background obviously with Kerry, Lavrov, etc. But I think this is not the real story. The real story is that in the long term it will be the EU's primary responsibility and I think it's a different game, it's not the Cold War. It is not the Soviet Union any more so it's a new game and it will be a huge challenge to the European Union.

What about the old-fashioned ministers of foreign affairs? I quite agree and just two remarks on this; I think that the formula of 60% officials and one-third diplomats from the member states is unsustainable. I think that it is really one bad thing about the External Action Service; it does not allow it to develop a corporate culture, a conjoined spirit and vision. It makes it very difficult if you have one set of people who are rotating and the other who are there forever basically. I think this formula has to be rethought, at the latest in 2015 and I think you need officials and you need diplomats yet probably you need other people who are experts in particular fields that you should be able to recruit on a short-term basis at least. I think the current system is much too rigid and drags us back.

On the relationship to the European Council, I think it's obvious the European Council and in the member states, the heads of state and the government are the real players in foreign policy today and the foreign ministers have lost a lot of clout. In a way, the External Action Service's relationship to the European Council is a very curious one because in a way it would be much more logical if the President of the European Council had a much stronger mandate since he represents the chiefs basically. But he represents the EU at his level with, I think, due regard, without prejudice to the competences of the High Representative so the High Representative is not under his direction

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basically and the locus of the High Representative is among the losers, so to say, in the Foreign Affairs Council.

So this is a very strange kind of configuration which was not the problem in the last few years because the European Council had zero time to do foreign policy, it was fully preoccupied with managing the financial crisis and Mr Van Rompuy had no ambition and probably also no capacity to play a major role in foreign policy except for participation in summits. It will depend very much on the relationship of the two personalities in the next round. If you have a President of the European Council who is very ambitious on foreign policy you could have a major institutional clash or the whole relationship would have to be, in a way, reconfigured. It's a very complex story but I find the present arrangement worked well so far but under the very particular situation of the European financial crisis. In the long term it could be very difficult.

On Stephen's question, I think we are postmodern and I think we should stay postmodern and this commitment to effective multilateralism is there to stay, it's in our genes, you cannot abandon this, it has to continue. But I think for me it's not so much the Ukraine that is a wake-up call, that is the return of geopolitics. I think it is the multi-polar system basically that changes the story. I think China and India have never been postmodern, they have always been in the realm of realism and if we want to deal with these poles we also have to develop a geopolitical side to us. I think it's inevitable and I think we should strive at the same time to basically influence them in the direction of buying into multilateral regimes, to accept the values-based multilateral diplomacy but we cannot ignore that this is not where their priorities are for the time being so we have to adjust to the new situation.

I think classes [?] are very directly relevant to this. I think it's the big part that sits together with Cathy Ashton discussing – I mean Mr Oettinger, with the Energy Commissioner. If the big leverage that one has in the external relations is trade, energy, visa policy, this sort of thing, if from the beginning this is part of the crisis management cooperation in addressing new challenges we'll be much more effective. If we leave it to the foreign minister to discuss it in the CFSB world I think nothing much will come of it.

DAVID O'SULLIVAN: Can I just respond on the question of national diplomats? Because I think it might get lost and I wouldn't want to leave Stefan's comments unchallenged. On this I profoundly disagree. I think firstly that it's been a huge plus in terms of experience and skills which we've had from the national diplomats but more importantly I think it's about precisely what we talked about earlier, it's about the complicity between the EAS and national ministries. We're not in the business of replacing national ministries, certainly not any time soon and I think what's really important is a network of people who know each other, particularly people who've spent time – my dream is that people come into the EAS at a junior point in their career, spend four years there, go back into their national system, spend more time there, then come back to the EAS perhaps at a more senior level and that within ten or 15 years...

When I speak to the Secretaries-General, I said to them last time we met, my dream is that in 15 years many of the people sitting round this table who are Secretaries-General of national foreign ministries have also spent four years in the External Action Service. That is when we will have succeeded because we all know that what counts is the ability to pick up the phone and talk to people, people in national ministries who understand how the European system works. And when budget permits I would really like to send people from the EAS to international foreign ministries but not the ones that they know best, of course, the other way around, send them to...

STEFAN LEHNE: You misunderstood me, I would not kill off the diplomats.

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DAVID O’SULLIVAN: No, I understand. But it’s not...

DANIEL KEOHANE: Gents, we should open it up again.

STEFAN LEHNE: The 60/one-third formula is the big [unclear].

DAVID O’SULLIVAN: Yes, but if you didn’t have...

DANIEL KEOHANE: David, sorry.

DAVID O’SULLIVAN: If you didn’t have a target it wouldn’t have happened.

DANIEL KEOHANE: David. If we may, we’ll open it up again for the audience and hand the microphone here, please.

FRASER CAMERON: Thanks, Fraser Cameron, former national diplomat as well. I think, reading your paper, I very much quickly came to the same conclusions David had, that it has to be set in a wider framework of, what kind of Europe do we have now, what do the stakeholders want after this Europe and what’s the nature of foreign policy? So until you actually look at these big issues you can’t really attribute qualities to the EAS that it is never going to have because the stakeholders are not going to give it these attributes.

And you touched on a theme which I remember your former boss said; we have 40,000 diplomats, the US has 4,000; it wasn’t obvious to him that we were ten times more effective than the US. So these questions, I think, you know about; vanity, prestige, angst are all important factors here in terms of how this service is going to develop and David picked up the sensitivities with the member states.

Now coming on to the recommendations, clusters won’t work. Why not? Because DG Trade has more power and influence than the High Rep and that’s going to stay that way for some time so whoever’s DG Commissioner for Trade is not going to accept being under the authority and other Commissioners – it’s all silos at the moment. One major EAS ambassador said that we have lots of strategic relationships but we don’t yet have a strategic relationship with the Commission so one has to build this up and just simply making clusters is not going to work.

But the real question is why do you think now that the member states are going to have the political will to choose someone of real quality and experience to actually take over this job? And a final question is recruitment and I’ll be interested to hear David on this; are we recruiting the right people for this service, where are the bankers? Where are the IT specialists, where are the anthropologists, where are the people who actually have this holistic view of the world? Are we not still recruiting too many lawyers and economists?

DANIEL KEOHANE: Where are the Lawrences of Arabia, in other words. This gentleman is next.

POUL CHRISTOFFERSEN: Yes, my name is Poul Christoffersen, I’m from the Danish Embassy and, as David hinted, I had something to do with the setting up of this. I think what has been said both by Stephen and by David makes a lot of sense. The only point where I disagree with them is when they excuse the fact that this review was not taken sufficiently seriously. I saw your paper as a way of saving, at the very end, some of the things which should have come out of the review because why did we plan the review for now? Exactly in order to avoid the situation we found ourselves in five

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years ago, that you had a Commission which had been established, you had a Commissioner for the Neighbourhood appointed, you had more or less decided that you would have a Commissioner for Development who would have a very defined portfolio.

If we are simply postponing this to after the new Commission has entered into force we will be in exactly the same situation and then we will have to wait for another five years before these things can be corrected. The main thing to be corrected – and I think there both David and Stephen agree – is that we need to get a closer relationship between the Commission and the EAS. It has to work better than it does now and the High Representative has to have a greater role in coordination and coordination – a and there I disagree with what was just said – is not just somebody sitting on somebody else. Coordination is to find new opportunities to use these other capabilities and to make a better cake or a bigger cake, not a question of cutting the cake into smaller slices.

So what I think is the message from Stefan's paper is that there should go a message from the European Council, when they are now on the 27th in the evening discussing recommendations they want to offer to the new Commission President or if they are doing it on 25th June, that we need this better harmony between what is happening.

Also on clusters, what you are suggesting on clusters; either it's done now and we find a solution on the question of a deputy for the High Representative or again the can is kicked not two years, it's kicked five years. So again, I think an issue like clusters or how it is applied in the area of foreign policy; it is now we need to solve it, not in 2015/16 or whenever it is. And then my last comment...

DANIEL KEOHANE: Please keep it brief, there are more people on the list.

POUL CHRISTOFFERSEN: The influence of member states and this nostalgia back to the old national Presidential system. I don't understand why it is not possible to create at the level of the groups the same atmosphere which existed when you had national Presidencies. I think one of the differences is that group Presidents, even PSE Presidents, have too little autonomy, are contributing too few ideas about what to develop. There they should learn about what happened in the earlier national Presidencies. Going back to the old system certainly is not something to be recommended.

DANIEL KEOHANE: Thank you. This gentleman beside you.

SELIM YENEL: Thank you. My name is Selim Yenel, I'm the Turkish Ambassador to the EU. I'm a proponent of the External Action Service so I think that you've been too harsh on yourselves. First of all, maybe from the outside we see the success stories and you mentioned that in your paper and I think that the External Action has been successful because it has instruments, it has something to offer. For example, on Kosovo and on Belgrade it was enlargement that proved to be the trick.

In Africa you have development aid. With Iran you have commercial or economic cooperation to offer them. On Russia you could not be successful because you don't know the mindset of Putin. He's the one who called the shots and therefore you could not have known what was going to happen. I think that when you said that others are in fusion and you're in the nuclear age or whatever, you're wrong on that as well because you have to consult, the others don't. We don't have to consult. The Americans, the Russians; they all act alone so you take some time but when you do decide it has structure, it's more solid. This is how we see it from the outside and that's why we want to join.

But nevertheless, I think that you're being too harsh on yourselves but I had the same question as Mr Cameron about the future of the High Representative. Up to now she was inexperienced and maybe

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with hindsight it was better because then she had an even view of things and then it was possible [?] for her to set up this organisation. Now she's going to give it to somebody with more experience who could make something out of it but do you think that the national governments will allow somebody with such experience to be there to overshadow them sometimes? So my question is similar to Mr Cameron's.

DANIEL KEOHANE: Thank you. This lady here, please. The microphone, thank you.

ZURAB IASHVILI: Thank you. I'm Zurab Iashvili, I'm a scholar from Georgia and I'm also representing Centre for European Policy Studies. I'm concerned that my question hasn't the same mood as the Turkish Ambassador has shared here, I'm a little bit more critical but, Mr O'Sullivan, you have shared your question, what kind of Union do we need? And I'm pretty sure that everybody in this hall and in Europe will say that you need a secure Union and if it takes to predict things for the security of the EU I'm pretty sure that the External Service has to do it.

My question is, do you see the Ukrainian events as an exception or do you translate it as a trend of the Russian foreign policy, do you see any context? And if you do see this context linking back to the Georgian/Russian war then do you predict anything in future, any danger for the eastern partnership countries, not in Ukraine and Georgia because we have already experienced it but maybe in other countries? Thank you very much.

DANIEL KEOHANE: The usual easy questions from the Carnegie crowd. Before I hand back to our panellists, I notice that all of our questions have come from this part of the room so if those of you who are more shy in the wings would like to add, we should have time for a couple more questions. I notice there's been one hand already but let me hand back and we'll start with Stefan this time, and then to David.

STEFAN LEHNE: Thank you. I think, Fraser, you're too pessimistic basically. Of course, ultimately this is from the first time I had anything to do with European foreign policy, the political will but it's not something that will fall from heaven. Obviously it's something that evolves over decades and in this evolution of political will personalities and institutions play a crucial role. It's about leadership. Working with Selam [?] on some issues where he exerted fairly strong, robust leadership, he got the member states to support him even though there were differences of view to begin with. It's just because he was passionate about it and convinced them that this was the way to go.

Similar with institutions; if there's the socialisation or Brusselisation of foreign policy, basically it is something that is built over decades, basically being used to working together and being used to seeking agreement and to accepting arguments, etc. So for me it's an evolutionary process. And you said, is there any chance to get some high-profile, heavyweight High Representative? I think actually, think of 1999. I was part of the Austrian delegation to the negotiations on the Amsterdam Treaty where we defined the rights of the High Representative in a very, very modest way; support the Presidency, support the Council. When we discussed this issue we said, it should not be a minister, no, it should be a high official, maybe state secretary but definitely no-one who can steal the light from the Presidency.

Then came the Kosovo war, the humiliation of basically again depending totally on US leadership on this issue, and suddenly I think it was in Cologne in 99 when they suddenly decided to pick someone quite heavyweight, NATO Secretary-General, long-time foreign minister, for this role and it worked out. So I think we have a similar kind of constellation; we have this big Ukraine shock and that could be, I think, a strong impetus to again go for a fairly ambitious solution. Obviously I think it was

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complicated because of the package deal and the horse-trading involved. There's a huge arbitrary element, it's just unpredictable and might go in this direction, might go in this direction but if there's any moment where people have to select the person very, very carefully I think it's now and in that regard I think I do continue to have some hopes and that also, I think, deals with your question.

On Russia, I do feel, of course, fundamentally, I don't think Mr Putin is Catherine the Great but I think he has never accepted the disintegration of the Soviet Union and he never really has accepted the sovereignty of the countries that emerged from the Soviet Union. I think therefore more action in this direction can be expected if it's not strongly discouraged. But somebody pointed that the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia had zero impact on the Moscow Stock Exchange because there was no Moscow Stock Exchange. Now, of course, the financial markets have declined by about 25%, the rouble has come down, at least \$60 billion has left Russia and I think this must give Mr Putin pause. I think he has to put this into his – he's no Adolf Hitler; he's not crazy. I think he's a fairly calculating person and the quality of life and quality of wallet of his entourage and people around him, I think, will be a factor.

So I do believe that there is a chance to influence the capitalists in Moscow and therefore I personally believe that we need to be ready to take quite painful measures. It might be necessary, might be the only way to stop it.

DANIEL KEOHANE: David, please.

DAVID O'SULLIVAN: Well, there's a huge amount there. I agree with a lot of what Stefan said. Mr Cameron; no, I don't agree with you at all and it's not true that DG Trade has more power than the High Representative. Actually probably the service in the Commission with whom we cooperate most closely is DG Trade because they share a common view because they're very good on trade negotiations, as I know, one of the most professional DGs in the Commission, but they also understand the geopolitical context but they don't have any aspiration to be the definers of that, they want to be a part of it and that's why, for example, when it was decided that we needed DCFTAs with the eastern partnership, I can assure you, this was not a commercially-driven decision. The DG Trade said, okay, if that's the political instruction we go ahead and do it, and we actually work very closely.

So I think you do need some kind of mechanism to drive the coordination. I agree entirely with Pul that certain of these decisions have to be taken at the moment of the appointments. You don't have to decide all the details but you certainly have to decide the principle and the thrust and I think we could discuss the review but I think it is clear that you cannot wait for six months into the establishment of the new Commission to decide whether you're going to have a cluster and whether the High Representative/Vice-President's going to be chair of a group of external relations Commissioners and how that's going to work. I think those decisions do need to be taken around the time of the appointments.

And I have no doubt, by the way, that the European Parliament will ask some very pertinent questions about precisely those issues when they're looking at the hearings and the confirmation of appointments and so forth which will happen fairly soon.

I entirely agree with Pul also about learning from the Presidency. We don't have to recreate the national Presidency but I think we have perhaps not drawn the lesson of the six-monthly impetus, six-monthly objectives and deliverables which do help drive the process. Perhaps it's sometimes a bit gimmicky but I think that is something from which we need to learn.

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In terms of who will be the next HR, VP, I've no idea. I get nervous when I hear you talking about, oh, we need someone with experience. It will be who it is and they will be who they are. I hope that they'll be successful. I don't know what the profile of a successful candidate is. Never forget, when President Delors was appointed he got a centimetre column on the third page of *Le Monde* and yet was still one of the figures with probably the greatest impact on European integration in living memory. So let's not be obsessed here, those of us who are watchers, defining who that person will be. They will be who they are. It may be someone who's been a well-known, established foreign minister; it may be someone who's never done that before. They could still turn out to be brilliant High Representative/Vice-President because the qualities needed to be successful at European level are not identical to the qualities needed to be successful as a national foreign minister.

And by the way, how many of our national foreign ministers knew anything about foreign policy before they were appointed foreign ministers? When governments are being created how many people say, oh, we need someone who has done absolutely lots of foreign policy.

PARTICIPANT: Not enough people [?].

DAVID O'SULLIVAN: So what I hope is that it is someone who is able to bring a certain political vision, a managerial capacity because you can't do anything at European level if you're not also partly able to manage the system, and above all, someone who is able to produce the kind of impetus with member states that you described with Javier Solana and I think that Cathy Ashton has demonstrated, notwithstanding some of the criticisms in the early stages, that she's also been able to do on some critical issues.

On Russia, nobody knows. This is the question we're all asking. It's certainly not an accident, it's certainly not a blip, it's definitely a change of policy but exactly what Mr Putin really wants, what's his endgame; there's lots of speculation and this is what has to be tested in the coming months. Is this something around which eventually some constructive outcome can be decided which would be acceptable? That's certainly not a new Yalta or a new division of Europe into zones of influence but it may be that there are important Russian interests which perhaps they haven't articulated as clearly in the past as they are now which we would be able to find some accommodation to.

I don't know but this is going to be, in my view, the defining issue of European foreign policy for the next institutional set-up. In my view, if Mr Putin is making a short-term calculation which certainly boosts his popularity and which unfortunately... What is deeply disturbing about what's happening is the propaganda in Russia. When you read what is being said on the television, the complete distortion of facts, the complete appealing to a very old form of nationalistic propaganda, this is deeply worrying because how do you roll that back, how do you undo that in terms of this confrontation? This we have to see; is this a permanent change of policy?

In my view, if it is, I agree entirely with Stefan; this is the 21st Century, this isn't going to work. This is not in Russia's interest, it's probably not even in Mr Putin's interest if he really understood it and Russia will pay a high price for this diplomatically and economically and I think eventually that will sink home to the Russian people and I suspect two or three years from now they may take a completely different view of these events than they do now in the immediate emotionalism of the annexation of Crimea or a sense of great patriotism.

And finally, just to thank the Turkish Ambassador for his kind remarks. It's true that some of the people looking at us from outside – I remember Bill Kennard used to often make the same comment, that the EAS looked a lot better from Washington than it sometimes did from Brussels. So perhaps

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we should also, without revelling in your kind words, take note that perhaps sometimes we do better than we perhaps realise.

DANIEL KEOHANE: Okay, there was one lady left who didn't get a chance to make her comment. I just want to give her a quick chance because we have two minutes but keep it very brief, please.

PARTICIPANT: Yes. It's building on scenarios for improving coherence and efficiency of the EU foreign policy and given this institutional framework where the importance of the European Council can only grow in the future, isn't the best way to ensure this increased coherence and efficiency for the future High Representative to become an influential Vice-President of the Commission first and foremost and not only by extension a High Representative?

DANIEL KEOHANE: Can you just identify yourself, please?

PARTICIPANT: I'm coming from the Council, [unclear].

DANIEL KEOHANE: Okay, thank you. And, Stefan, if you want to identify who you would like to be the next High Representative, please feel free.

STEFAN LEHNE: How did you say; whoever he or she is, that's going to happen. That's true but then you started describing certain qualities that you wanted to see after all! So I do think that personalities matter and I do believe that we are in a constellation which gives these decisions a different type of importance than they had five years ago and I do see that really this is a very, very important opportunity.

DANIEL KEOHANE: David, do you want to say anything at the end?

DAVID O'SULLIVAN: It's a hugely important opportunity. My only point is people surprise you and we should have an open mind about precisely who gets the job. I think Cathy Ashton finishes on a much, much higher note than she began and, in my view, somewhat unfairly when she began so I think she has also surprised. I think what she has done on Serbia/Kosovo or on Iran – personally I saw that because I saw her as a trade negotiator and I could see her capacity to generate empathy and to create an atmosphere where people are actually willing to compromise. That was something perhaps other people didn't see.

I agree with you; personalities matter. I'm just saying that it's not the obvious people that you say you need to have in the job that will necessarily do the job best and some people who maybe are slightly surprising as appointments could turn out actually to be fantastic; that's my only point.

On the question of being a Vice-President rather than a High – you need to be both. That's why the thing was designed but it's true that perhaps the aspect of the job which has been least developed in this period for all kinds of good reasons – I mean understandable reasons, not good reasons – is the Vice-President and I think that needs to be corrected but that also needs the President of the Commission and indeed the European Council to empower the HOVP to play that role and I agree with Bula [?], that's something that needs to be decided very early on in the process and not in six months' or nine months' time once the pattern of work has been too firmly established.

DANIEL KEOHANE: Great. We've come to the end of the discussion. Thank you all for your attention and indeed your participation. For those of you not rushing to see the televised Spitzenkandidaten debate, please do stay for the drinks reception but before we move to the drinks

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reception that Carnegie is generously offering us, please join me in showing our appreciation for our two excellent panellists. Thank you both, Stefan and David, very much.