



EUROPEAN UNION

Brussels, 8 July 2010  
A 129/10

## **Statement by HR Catherine Ashton following the vote in the European Parliament on the European Union External Action Service**

Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, made the following statement today:

*"I am delighted that an overwhelming majority of the European Parliament has approved the opinion on the European External Action Service, based on my initial proposal.*

*I want to express my gratitude for the constructive engagement and close co-operation of the Parliament and the rapporteurs – in particular Elmar Brok, Guy Verhofstadt and Roberto Gualtieri - with whom I have worked intensively to achieve today's result. Discussions in the various committees have helped to improve the text for the EEAS decision and have given us a shared basis on which to build the Service.*

*Since tabling my proposal in March, the institutions of the EU have worked tirelessly with a shared vision. Today we are closer to realising this vision, but a lot of work remains to be done.*

*I will continue to put my energy into this so that we can establish an effective service as soon as possible. The Commission will now have to give its final consent before the Council adopts the decision later this month.*

*It is important also that we move rapidly with the amendment to the Staff and Financial Regulations, and an amending budget for 2010 to allow the Service formally to come into being.*

*While remaining ambitious to deliver on the promises of the Treaty of Lisbon, I will do everything possible, especially in the current economic climate, to maximise cost efficiencies, avoid duplication and strengthen financial discipline. I want a lean and efficient Service that assures best value for money, staffed by the best and the brightest from across the European Union."*

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**P R E S S**

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