

**Personal remarks by Prof. Danuta Hübner
Representative of Poland's Government to the Convention
on the Future of the European Union
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Presidency,

Colleagues,

I believe that a strengthening of the foreign policy of the Union is one of the areas in which public opinion, with little hesitation, would approve progress made in the Convention and the IGC. Winning back citizen support for European integration is one of our main tasks, this is therefore an area where we really should make progress.

It is one of those areas which are not entirely intergovernmental today and which most likely will not become a pure community policy either. It will have to combine the best of both worlds. We must work towards the synergy of the two.

First, who speaks for the European Union? We have learnt to our cost that one essential of foreign policy is to speak clearly and with one voice. Third parties cannot be expected to make the effort to learn the intricacies of the European decision-making process. This is only one reason why some states are more effective in foreign policy than the Union; only one reason but an important one.

This is a question littered with pitfalls for the unwary; should the centre of power be in the Commission or the Council, what influence should the large and small member states have, should there be voting or should many of the decisions be subject to unanimity? Let me be straightforward and say that for me the essential criterion must be the efficiency and effectiveness of Union policy in maintaining peace and stability in Europe and, with our allies, in the rest of the world.

The way I see it is first of all to build on the achievements of the High Representative who should gradually gain more resources and more decision-making power. The crucial difference could be made if the High Representative chaired the new External Relations and General Affairs Council. He or she would then take over the role of the rotating presidency ensuring greater continuity of policy making. He could also chair the Political and Security Committee not only in the times of crises but on permanent basis.

If we are serious about creating and benefiting from synergies, the European Commission must be prominently present in this framework. The High Representative needs to set the EU's long term strategic agenda in close teamwork with the European Commission. Long-term foreign policy initiatives should be cross-signed by both actors and close channels of communication have to be maintained. The Commission has to use its right of initiative in this area more actively than before.

The decision-making in the CFSP must be made more efficient. Above all foreign policy decisions in the Union must remain flexible, because this is obviously a very delicate area which touches on the history and development of nations as well as their current interests. The particular interests and strengths of member states in certain geographical areas should be respected and should be considered as advantages not problems. But these particular situations should not prevent the Union taking action. The potential created by the treaties for the use of super-qualified majority voting and the creative abstention could be scrupulously explored.

Similarly, I believe that enhanced cooperation mechanisms will have to be used without remorse. The choice is clear: either the EU will have a meaningful voice in foreign policy or as member states we will have to refill this space again. While striving to retain cohesion, the EU cannot afford to sacrifice its efficiency. Enhanced cooperation will bring home the message to some member states that they cannot afford to be excessively insistent. We cannot allow ourselves to be hijacked by our sensitivities at the expense of future progress.

In my view, the EU's foreign policy will need to start from a joint strategic concept and proceed by coordinating activities on the ground. We need to have more joint reflection in the enlarged Union, bringing together the specialisations that we all have with respect to some parts of the world. This strategic reflection should be

programmed and hosted by the High Representative working together with the Political and Security Committee and the European Commission. The other side of the coin is to monitor policy implementation in the field. It is very often the case that member states contribute to an EU assistance effort but also carry out bilateral programmes which are not always of complementary nature. Surely, nobody can be prevented from doing so but the more coordination the better. There should be incentives in place for member states to pursue project in the common framework instead of running it on their own. The High Representative could have at his disposal a share of the national foreign policy budgets to reflect the pooling of resources. This would help to build an embryonic European diplomatic corps consisting of diplomats being seconded to a form of the European Foreign Policy Commission as well as to the various missions all over the world.

My second point is that as we strengthen Union foreign policy-making at the centre, we must also tackle its representation in third countries. The situation today where we have fifteen embassies representing the member states, together with a Commission seems to me to be somewhat inefficient. After the coming enlargement, the situation will be that bit more inefficient. The Union should surely not allow institutional and Member State jealousies to reduce the efficiency of its representation abroad. One could think of the creation of European Union representations, staffed by diplomats from European Union institutions and Member States and reporting to the High Representative, replacing regular embassies where no strong national interest

exists or ensuring their coordination where there is a multitude of national representations. In modern times we need a flexible and cost-friendly presence abroad.

There would still be a role for national embassies of course carrying out normal national functions and defending legitimate national interests. But in those areas relating to the CFSP there could be a pooling of the work between the embassies and the EU delegation, leading to improved reporting, more efficient relations with the foreign government and real savings.

Thirdly, I hope that enlargement will help the Union to concentrate its foreign policy somewhat more on the enlarged Union's neighbours; the western CIS countries, the Middle East and the Mediterranean. Obviously Union foreign policy operates worldwide and there are key regions outside, where we have close relations and legitimate interests. Nevertheless priorities need to be set and we in Poland are pleased to see that interest is now shifting to establish a higher quality of relations with Russia, the Ukraine and, in spite of the difficulties, with Belarus. We have spent considerable effort since 1990 building good relations with all our neighbours in central Europe; we do not want these relations damaged by our entry into the Schengen system. I am convinced that the enlargement of the Union will have a positive effect on the economies and societies of these countries but they must be convinced of this. This conviction will only come if the Union shows itself open to establishing a new quality of political and economic relationship with them. Of

course we will insist on political and economic conditionality but let us go beyond the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements, let us talk free trade and cooperation to create a yet far larger area of internal security in Europe.