11 The EU Special Representatives as a capability for conflict management

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Introduction[1]

For over 15 years, the European Union Special Representatives (EUSRs) have been part of the European Union's (EU) arsenal of foreign policy instruments. They are a very visible expression of the EU's capability to act and to coordinate – the Union's 'face and voice' (EU Council Secretariat 2005: 1) in crisis regions from the African Great Lakes to the Middle East and from the Balkans to Central Asia. Today, the EU has deployed 10 EUSRs to nearly two dozen countries that are of great concern to its broader security interests. In them, the EU has availed itself of a well-established diplomatic instrument that could be seen as a quasi-precondition for international actorness. This makes them a central part of the Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

Interestingly, EUSRs were not only an expression of the extending reach of European foreign policy, with mutual implications between the deepening of the institutional foundations of CFSP and the evolution of the instrument of EUSRs (Grevi 2007: 29). What is more, as it appears, the EUSRs have consistently been ahead of the institutional and political developments in European foreign policy. The Maastricht Treaty of 1993 had created a foreign policy on paper but failed to provide the Union with the instruments to actually pursue strategic aims or even intervene in conflicts that threatened the stability of the continent. This became most obvious in the wars following the break-up of Yugoslavia, where the system of revolving presidencies – the EU's mechanisms for external representation – had soon shown its limitations. The EU was simply inept at stopping the fighting.

In a situation where the EU had failed the foreign policy test on its doorstep, EU envoys emerged in the African Great Lakes region and for the Middle East Peace Process in 1996. They were dispatched before their function was enshrined in the subsequent Amsterdam Treaty. More substantially, they represented the EU's political approach to a region before there was anything like a common policy. And, not even ten years after their invention, they became a test case for 'double-hatting' long before the Lisbon Treaty put this feature into practice at the level of the new High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton. It is in this sense that they have been breaking new ground for EU foreign policy.

This chapter explores how the EUSRs have contributed to the EU's conflict management efforts by enhancing its capability to both act and coordinate. I will in particular analyse their role in the African Great Lakes, in the Middle East and in Macedonia. These three mandates form a representative mixture of EU engagement in conflict management activities: there is proximity and distance with regard to the conflict zones; the mandates are both regional and country-specific; and there is a varying degree of involvement of other international actors. Particular focus will be on the EUSRs' internal function, coordinating member states, missions, as well as EU institutions.

Based on these observations, I will conclude on two points: first, I will establish a basic profile of the 'envoy instrument', distinguishing more generically between eight different roles that Special Representatives can fulfil. Second, recognising their important internal role, I claim that crisis management as such is not only directed at an external conflict in question but, in the case of the EU, serves a particular function in the broader process of European integration.

Why send an envoy? A common rationale

When in the winter of 1995/96, a political and humanitarian crisis with millions of refugees threatened to destabilise the whole 'Great Lakes region' in Africa, the international community, for want of any better policy, tried to alleviate the suffering mainly by providing humanitarian aid. The flow of money into the region reached a rate of one million US dollars a day, more than half of it emanating from the EU (the Community plus member states) (McLoughlin 1998: 1). It was clear, however, that such aid would not provide a solution to the underlying political problems.

Three insights dominated EU discussions aimed at halting the crisis: first, it was acknowledged that the roots of the crisis were not found in just one state but stretched across boundaries; second, the crisis was seen as another periodic upheaval that was part of a long-term predicament plaguing the region; and third, if the EU wanted to have an impact on the situation itself, it needed a political visibility commensurate with its economic commitment (McLoughlin 1998: 2). While it was clear that, at that time, the EU with its still infant CFSP had little or no influence on the ongoing crisis, the assumption was that any given political presence would be bolstered by the existing economic assistance – and vice versa. In this situation, in March 1996 the Council nominated the former United Nations (UN) Special Representative for Mozambique, Aldo Ajello, as first 'EU Special Envoy' for the Great Lakes region (Council of the EU 1996a).

In the early- and mid-1990s, not only the wars in Central Africa but also the developments in the Middle East were of major concern to the EU. The EU supported the Palestinian democratisation process by sending observers to the 1995 elections to the Palestinian Council, the first democratic elections in the autonomous territories (Council of the EU 1995). However, the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister and Nobel Peace Laureate Yitzhak Rabin in November of the same year stymied most people's hopes for peace. Against this background of rising tensions and growing European involvement, the EU nominated its second Special Envoy in November 1996 (Council of the EU 1996b; see also Dietl 2005: 99–111). Miguel Angel Moratinos, a career diplomat who shortly before had been appointed Spanish ambassador to Israel, became the EU's envoy for the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP).

The motivation to appoint a second EUSR was similar to that of the first one: to achieve political representation proportionate to the EU's economic aid (Council of the EU 1996b; see Soetendorp 2002: 289; Dietl 2005: 102–3; and Ginsberg 2001). In fact, following the Oslo Accord, the EU had taken on the lion's share of the financial support of the Palestinian Authority (PA) (Asseburg 2003b: 175; Soetendorp 2002: 288; see European Commission 2005a: 2). Without this European financial aid, the PA could not have survived for long. To accompany such engagement on the political level was the main task of the EUSR.

At the same time, the idea was to bolster the EU's international standing. The Union should not be disregarded again as it was when the United States (US) failed to consult their European partners prior to the Clinton–Arafat summit of October 1996 (Ginsberg 2001: 149).

However, neither Israel nor the United States welcomed greater involvement on the part of the EU (Dannreuther 2002: 9; see also Regelsberger 1997: 217). While Israelis perceived Europeans as biased against them and preferred the exclusive support of the US, the latter did not see a significant actor in the EU (Dietl 2005: 106–7; Tocci 2005: 13–14; see *Mideast Mirror* 1998). Establishing the EU as a credible partner was conceivably the foremost, though not an easy, task of the EUSRs. That said, just as in the Great Lakes Region, while it joined the mediation efforts of other actors (such as the US or the UN) the EU could not actually contribute to resolving the crisis.

Unfolding events in the Republic of Macedonia in 2001 demanded that the new EU crisis management institutions created under the European Security and Defence Policy (now Common Security and Defence Policy, or CSDP) be put to a test before being solidly established. Once more it was proven that political crises do not wait for mechanisms to be operational. Following violent attacks by Albanian extremists on Macedonian government institutions, the EU engaged in a shuttle diplomacy hitherto unseen: a series of EU emissaries travelled to Skopje, from External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten to the EU Presidency to the (then still fairly new) High Representative for CFSP Javier Solana (Reichwein and Schlotter 2007: 261; Schneckener 2001: 92).

The small and young country of Macedonia soon became a testing ground for the new EU foreign policy instruments, including experimenting with different representatives. A Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA), the new bilateral agreement on the road to EU membership, was initialled in April 2001, shortly after the outbreak of the crisis, in order to strengthen the government in power. To uphold its influence, however, the EU held back the SAA's benefits until the government agreed to make concessions to the Albanian side (Piana 2002: 212). To be represented in the crisis mediation efforts, the EU at first nominated, in an ad hoc arrangement, the British ambassador in Skopje as Solana's deputy. This position was upgraded in June 2001 and with a view to having a counterpart to the respective US envoy (Jaanson 2008: 7) by the appointment of former French Defence Minister François Léotard as EU Special Representative (Council of the EU 2001a). His original task was to closely monitor the developments on the ground and to support political dialogue between the parties with the objective of contributing to a settlement (Grevi 2007: 92).

In addition to the three mandates examined here in more detail, other EUSR mandates have been issued to cover the Union's major regions of concern: the Western Balkans and South-eastern Europe, Central Africa and the Middle East, as well as the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Both the rise in numbers and the widening of geographical scope of the EUSRs led the High Representative for CFSP, Javier Solana, to remark on the occasion of the first joint EUSR seminar:

> You as EUSRs are the visible expression of the EU's growing engagement in some of the world's most troubled countries and regions. The list of where we have EUSRs is, in part, also [a] list of where our foreign and security policy priorities lie.
>
> (Solana 2005: 2)

As it thus appears, EUSRs have a common rationale. The initial reasons for sending an EU Special Representative to a given country or region centre on three aims:

1. to achieve political representation commensurate with existing economic engagement, ultimately enhancing the EU's international standing;

2. to gain information about an ongoing conflict and, on this basis, develop a policy towards a given country or region;
3. to influence international mediation efforts with respect to a crisis.

The EUSRs – a capability to act and coordinate

By their mere existence, EUSRs represent the Union in a given country or region. Being a face and a voice of the EU, they (passively) stand for and (actively) inform others about EU policies. Until the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009, the EU did not have any 'embassies' dealing with foreign policy issues. The 130 or so delegations to third countries and international organisations of the European Community (EC), in contrast, could only deal with economic and bilateral affairs (cf. European Commission 2004c). The EUSRs thus increased the EU's visibility and profile, especially compared to the rotating Presidency. Given the establishment of the External Action Service (EAS) under the Lisbon Treaty, Union delegations abroad now cover the full range of the EU's external relations as well as foreign policy. What is of interest here, thus, is the EUSRs' more active role, both towards the conflict (acting) and towards other EU actors (coordinating). I will deal with these two aspects consecutively.

Capability to act

The focus of the EUSRs' work is on security policy and crisis management: they offer advice and support to the conflicting parties with the aim of effectively implementing EU policies and terminating the crisis or conflict. To do this, they have a range of – primarily diplomatic – means at their disposal, e.g. proffering good offices, mediation, facilitation and the like. EUSRs also closely cooperate with third parties, be they states (like Russia or the US) or international organisations (like the UN, the African Union, or the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)). More often than not, international crisis management efforts are conducted through a group of friends, as the informal setting bringing together interested states and organisations is often called.

In addition, EUSRs also provide information about and analysis of the current situation in their mandate area to EU decision-makers. Based on their findings, EUSRs can develop policy proposals that they feed into the Brussels policy-making process. Functionally, they could thus also be considered, in analogy to the anatomical metaphor used previously, the 'eyes and ears' of the EU.

The EUSRs are closely linked to all four major players in EU foreign policy – the High Representative, the Council, the Commission and the member states – in all phases of their work. They implement their respective mandate under the authority of the High Representative, Catherine Ashton. The Political and Security Committee (PSC) is the EUSRs' primary point of contact with the Council. It provides the EUSRs with strategic guidance and political direction. While EUSRs may sometimes report directly to the Council, the actual working level contacts are mostly with the High Representative's new EAS. By reporting regularly to the Council working groups, EUSRs also reach the staff in member states' permanent missions and the relevant Commission units. Due to their status as CFSP Advisors paid from Community funds, they are accountable to the Commission for the budget allocated under the financial statement for their missions.

African Great Lakes

The very first mandate ever was simple, broad and open to initiatives on the part of the EUSR (see Council of the EU 1996a). Its objective was to assist the countries of the region in resolving the crisis, complementing rather than competing with existing international initiatives such as those of the UN and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). Given the inexperience of member states with such an instrument, the EUSR's working mandate was deliberately left broad, if not vague: to support the ongoing crisis management efforts by international and African actors; to establish and maintain close contacts with all parties involved; and to help with the preparations for a peace conference. The mandate also contained an important element with regard to a potentially proactive role of the EUSRs. By stipulating that the envoy 'may make recommendations to the Council on measures which the Union might undertake to fulfil its objectives in the region' (ibid.), it opened the way for providing relevant policy input rather than only reporting to the Council.

Much of the EUSR's work in the Great Lakes region was directed at active conflict resolution, though without being able to pacify the region substantially; at least, it helped the EU gain a place in the international arena. The EUSR intensified his support of international mediation efforts led by UN and OAU after fighting broke out again in 1998. Previously, Laurent Kabila, with support from Rwanda, Uganda, Angola, Burundi and Eritrea, had ousted President Mobutu of Zaire in May 1997 and renamed the country as Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Other neighbouring countries were drawn in, turning the conflict into what commentators dubbed 'Africa's first world war' (International Crisis Group 2000: 1; Doyle 1998; CNN 2000).

The Lusaka Peace Agreement of 1999, which EUSR Ajello had helped to negotiate together with a myriad other special envoys both African and non-African (Krause and Schlotter 2007: 362), formally brought a ceasefire and a commitment to withdraw all foreign troops (Moller 2002: 35). The EU supported the follow-up to the Lusaka Agreement with the establishment of a Joint Military Commission. Yet, fighting between different rebel groups, most of them with foreign support, persisted and both the ceasefire and the troop withdrawal were largely ignored (International Crisis Group 2000: 2; Fiedler 2004: 323). When President Laurent Desiré Kabila of Congo was assassinated in January 2001, his son, Joseph Kabila, took over and embarked on a process of national dialogue, democratisation and economic liberalisation. He concluded peace agreements with Rwanda and Uganda as well as the most important rebel groups; in the wake of this effort, a large number of foreign troops left the country (Krause 2003: 166).

In the following years, EUSR Ajello concentrated his efforts mostly on the DRC, and there shifted his focus from conflict resolution to sustaining a fragile peace and a delicate political transition (Grevi 2007: 112–13). His responsibility increased with the EU's first autonomous military operation *Artemis* in Eastern Congo, launched in June 2003 and conceived as a three-month-long 'bridging mission' in preparation for the launch of a UN operation (see Faria 2004b: 47–55). Fourteen hundred troops under French command were dispatched to protect civilians who had fled the fighting in the area bordering Uganda and Rwanda. Ajello's task was to provide political support to the mission, which he did not see as an end in itself but rather as 'the start of something bigger' in the framework of CFSP (Astill and Norton-Taylor 2003: 13). He was right to the extent that soon two more CSDP operations followed, one supporting Congolese police (EUPOL Kinshasa, later extended to EUPOL RD Congo) and another dealing with security sector reform (EUSEC RD Congo), in 2004 and 2005 respectively (European Council 2003d: 12; see Law 2007: 10–11). While these two missions are

still ongoing, EUFOR DR Congo was a shorter military operation in support of the UN Organisation Mission in the DRC (MONUC) during the election process in the country (Council of the EU 2006b).

After four successive CSDP missions in the country, it is fair to say that, given the multiplicity of the means employed on the ground, the DRC has become, together with the Western Balkans, 'the largest laboratory for EU crisis management' (Grevi 2007: 114; for the Balkans, see Calic 2008: 27). In all this, it was the permanent presence of EUSR Ajello as a coordinating authority which helped to politically prepare as well as smoothly run these missions (Grevi 2007: 116; Council of the EU 2007d: paragraph 290). Concluding nearly 11 full years in office, Aldo Ajello, the first ever and longest-serving EUSR, handed over, in February 2007, to Roeland van de Geer, a Dutch career diplomat with considerable experience in Africa (Council of the EU 2007e).

Middle East Peace Process

The initial mandate for the Middle East Peace Process broadly included five different tasks: to establish contacts with the parties and other relevant actors; to offer advice and good offices to the parties; to help implement agreements reached by the parties; to develop and pursue the EU's own initiatives; and to monitor compliance (or non-compliance) of the parties with international norms and their possible actions prejudging a final peace settlement (Council of the EU 1996b). Like his colleague of the African Great Lakes region, however, EUSR Moratinos had to carve out a role for himself, usually working quietly but decisively in the background. He did so for example during the successful mediation efforts that took place early during his mandate, in January 1997, aimed at the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Hebron (see Soetendorp 2002: 290; Makovsky 1997: 1). One of the first major achievements of the new EU Special Envoy was to arrange, together with the Dutch presidency, a meeting of the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs Levy with the President of the PA Council Arafat, on the margins of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Malta in April 1997 (Regelsberger 1997: 217; Nolan 1997). This took place following a long period of frosty silence, when Israelis and Palestinians refused to speak with each other on an official level.

One year later, in April 1998, the EU and the PA adopted, on Moratinos's initiative, an agreement to establish an EU–Palestinian Joint Permanent Security Cooperation Committee, including the installation of an EU security advisor with the EUSR's staff (Ginsberg 2001: 139; see Pelletreau 1998; *The Economist* 1997). This led the Council to modify the mandate in order to include cooperation on security issues with the aim of assisting the Palestinians to meet their commitments on security under the Oslo Accords (Council of the EU 1998). Another important policy contribution of EUSR Moratinos concerned the proceedings of the March 1999 Berlin European Council. At that meeting, the heads of state and government advanced a two-state solution to the Middle East conflict, which made the EU the first international actor to promote this proposal (European Council 1999f: Part IV).

With the outbreak of the so-called second Intifada in September 2000 and the breakdown of the last-ditch effort in Israeli–Palestinian negotiations in Taba in January 2001, the Middle East Peace Process was at an impasse. In a change from the previous desire for a visible political role (in addition to its existing economic importance), the EU now used the presence of its Special Representative to demand a more active and responsible role in the conflict resolution efforts. Simultaneously, trust of the EU among regional leaders grew (Dannreuther 2002: 10), although Israel in particular remained wary (Asseburg 2003b: 184; see Ortega 2003: 56). At the Taba talks, for example, with the lack of any US presence, the EUSR was

the only outside observer and 'the resulting Moratinos "non-paper" became the jointly recognised record' (Nonneman 2003: 39; see Moratinos 2002).

The gradual emergence of the Middle East 'Quartet' in 2001 and 2002 gave another boost to the EU's presence in the international arena. It also led the Council to give EUSR Moratinos more freedom to present his own policy proposals, bolstering his role as the Union's representative therein (Dietl 2005: 109–110; Council of the EU 2002b). The Quartet assembled representatives of the US, Russia, the UN and the EU as the main actors mediating the Israeli–Palestinian conflict (Dietl 2005: 242).[2] While initially regarded as a fig leaf for the US administration's unwillingness to deal with the conflict actively, the Quartet soon began to develop its own positive dynamic and policy proposals (Neugart 2003: 284). The group's most important output of that time, other than continuous multilateral meetings and shuttle diplomacy, had been the agreement on a 'road map', in October 2002. The document, which in substance envisioned a peaceful two-state solution and, procedurally speaking, reaffirmed US commitment to the MEPP, clearly bore a European stamp (Asseburg 2003a: 23–24; Tocci 2005: 14).

In July 2003, Ambassador Moratinos handed over his position to Marc Otte, a Belgian diplomat who had previously worked as Solana's advisor on defence and security policy (Council of the EU 2003b). This experience served him well when, in late 2005, following the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza strip, the EU deployed its first two CSDP missions in the Middle East. An EU Border Assistance Mission was sent to monitor operations of the Gaza–Egypt border crossing point at Rafah (EUBAM Rafah), and an EU Co-ordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support (EU COPPS, headquartered in Ramallah) was established to provide support to the Palestinian Civil Police. In both cases, the head of mission received guidance from High Representative Solana through EUSR Otte, requiring him to build a bridge into the security sector (Council of the EU 2005e). The fact that, with EUBAM Rafah, Israel had accepted the EU as a partner in the field of security policy was in itself considered a success and a sign of the EU's increased international reputation (Neugart 2006: 279; Beatty 2003; Keinon *et al.* 2003).

Victory for the Hamas party in the Palestinian elections in January 2006 put a freeze on Middle East diplomacy, effectively stopping an until then fairly successful EU policy and the EUSR's work (Tocci 2006: 8). As a reaction, the EU resorted to holding back its support funds for the Palestinian territories.[3] Moreover, the war between Israel and the Lebanese Hezbollah in the summer of 2006 severely tested European diplomacy, eventually leading not to a CSDP mission there but to a UN mission with strong European ingredients (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, UNIFIL). In this deteriorating situation, EUSR Otte continued to negotiate as a member of the Quartet, as well as to bring about practical improvements in direct talks with the conflict parties, such as the reopening of the Rafah crossing point in July 2006 (see Grevi 2007: 138).

Macedonia

In Macedonia, EUSR Léotard was instrumental in the international mediation efforts, acting both in his own capacity as a respected former politician and in support of the High Representative (Reichwein and Schlotter 2007: 262–5; Finn 2001). A breakthrough was reached in August 2001 when the Macedonian government and Albanian leaders met in Ohrid for negotiations under American and European supervision. The talks eventually produced a Framework Agreement outlining, among other things, a constitutional reform giving more representation to the Albanian minority.

Successful mediation did not bring an end to the EUSR's mandate, though – only a change of guard. At the end of October, Alain Le Roy replaced his fellow countryman Léotard. Given their different backgrounds – one a politician and 'troubleshooter', the other a career diplomat – this change of personnel reflected the progress made on the way to pacifying the conflicting parties. Le Roy's main task was to supervise the agreement's implementation on behalf of the international community, thereby facilitating further progress towards European integration (through the Stabilisation and Association Process, SAP) (Council of the EU 2001b; Grevi 2007: 93–4).

At the end of October 2002, Alain le Roy handed over to the Belgian Alexis Brouhns (Council of the EU 2002a). EUSR Brouhns served in Skopje for a little more than a year, and it was during his turn that CSDP operations *Concordia*, a military stabilisation operation, and its successor *Proxima*, a police-monitoring mission, were deployed to Macedonia (Council of the EU 2003a, 2003c). When the EU police advisory team (EUPAT), successor to operation *Proxima*, terminated its work in June 2006, this concluded five years of CSDP involvement in the country (Council of the EU 2005f). With the European Council having granted Macedonia candidate status (European Council 2005), EUSR Europe Fouéré started to concentrate on supporting important steps on the way to European integration, including reform of the judiciary, and on coordinating the various EU actors on the ground (see Grevi 2007: 96). Not least because of this enormous progress, from the brink of civil war to EU candidacy in only four years, EU action in Macedonia is often hailed as a successful example of, if not conflict *prevention*, then at least crisis *management* in close cooperation with the US and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (Piana 2002: 212–16).

Capability to coordinate

In the realm of foreign policy, the Union has to rely on the consensus of 27 member states and the Commission does not have the policy-unifying role it has in the first pillar. Therefore, EUSRs strive to coordinate national policies of member states and CSDP operations as well as the activities of other EU institutions (i.e. mainly the Commission), aiming to achieve the greatest coherence possible (see Grevi 2007: 46). After a number of years, the Council formalised this coordinating function in its 2007 guidelines (Council of the EU 2007f: 6).

Member states

The particular function of internal coordination was obvious from the very beginning. Because an EU strategy towards the Great Lakes region simply did not exist (Fiedler 2004: 330; Grevi 2007: 112), the envoy's efforts to narrow the considerable policy differences in EU member states' approaches to this region were of great importance. Especially former colonial powers like France, the United Kingdom (UK) and Belgium had particular, often-times diverging, interests in the region (Fiedler 2004: 318; Krause and Schlotter 2007: 353).

Over the years, EUSRs have learned to fill the intergovernmental coordination role bestowed upon them. This includes the habit of regularly meeting national ambassadors in the field and paying frequent visits to member state capitals in order to discuss policy. Cooperation with national ambassadors had first emerged as an unwritten rule before being incorporated into the guidelines. Non-resident EUSRs hold at least one meeting with national ambassadors (often including the Commission head of delegation) when they embark on a trip to the region. Such an exchange of opinion could also possibly take place twice per trip: to receive local information prior to meeting the national authorities, and to brief ambassadors pursuant to these talks. The 2007 guidelines then specified that the EUSR should provide

regular briefings to member states' missions in the field, which in turn should make best efforts to assist the EUSR in the implementation of their mandate (Council of the EU 2007f: 6). In addition, many official meetings are attended in the troika format, bringing together the EUSR, the head of Commission delegation and the Presidency ambassador (the latter function now being taken up by the head of Union delegation). Such coordination is again in the interest of the EUSR and his or her team because they need the ambassadors on board if they want their issues to make it through the Council.

Another instrument is that of establishing a core group of member states with a particular interest in the country or region of concern, which can meet either in the field or in capitals. Aldo Ajello established such an informal group among the national ambassadors in the Great Lakes region. In doing so, he drew on his own experiences from the UN: already as Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Mozambique, he had established what he called a 'mini Security Council' of relevant UN member states whose representatives he met and briefed regularly (Peck 2004: 333). Not only are meaningful policy discussions difficult with 27 people around the table, but also it is particularly important to integrate the more active member states in order to avoid sending conflicting messages. In this vein, it has become a regular activity of EUSRs to travel to the capitals of interested member states in order to explain and discuss the European approach to their mandate area. Enhancing such inclusiveness towards member states is by no means restricted to the big ones, but includes all those with a stake in the respective region.

All in all, such coordination has helped not only to keep member states on board, but more importantly to streamline information flowing from the field into national capitals as well as that of the EU. An explanation by Aldo Ajello may illustrate this effect:

> When I briefed [national ambassadors] each week, I was basically dictating the reports they would write to their capitals – which had two good results. First, I knew they were sending the right information. Second, I knew they were all sending the same information at the same time. So, all the capitals were reacting in the same way.
>
> (Peck 2004: 333)

Such internal harmonisation of positions is important because EUSRs, in dealing with crises, usually work through international coordination formats where more and more often the EU is present in a way in which the member states are not. In these cases, EU core groups headed by the EUSR become the main policy-discussing bodies, helping to develop a unified policy by bringing together the different positions from member states. In the Great Lakes, for example, it was only after the EU had reached internal consensus about its policies, greatly advanced by the EUSR, that it could become active externally (Grevi 2007: 113).

In addition, EUSRs can take a position in the middle ground above perceived national interest: this was particularly significant in the case of Macedonia, where national ambassadors, being based in Skopje and with the government as their main interlocutor, tended to be pro-Macedonian. While they had little understanding of the Albanian revolt in 2001, the EUSR and his team were newcomers with a more balanced view, who could talk to both the Macedonian government and to the Albanian leaders.

Missions

On top of coordinating member states, the EUSRs form a link to CSDP instruments on the ground. In the Congo, the onset of four CSDP missions marked a shift away from building a policy consensus among member states to 'managing the growing EU projection in the field'

(Grevi 2007: 113). Following the *Artemis* mission, the Council mandated the EUSR to provide political guidance to the heads of the EU police and security sector reform missions in the DRC (EUPOL Kinshasa and EUSEC RD Congo) as well as of the EUPOL COPPS in the Palestinian Territories (Council of the EU 2005c, 2005e). Likewise in Macedonia, for both *Concordia* and *Proxima*, the EUSR acted as the primary interface between the CSDP head of mission and local political authorities, as well as coordinating the missions with other EU activities on the ground (Grevi 2007: 93).

By 2006, it was therefore fair to say that a pattern had emerged in EU civilian crisis management where the head of mission reports to the High Representative through the EUSR with political guidance flowing in the opposite direction, from the PSC through the EUSR to the head of mission (Hansen 2006: 36). With the creation of a Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC) in the course of 2007, a new civilian command structure was established in Brussels and EUSRs have formally been removed from the chain of command. Still, the EUSR is left with providing 'local' (rather than general) political guidance to the head of mission (Council of the EU 2007f: 7).

Institutions

Gradually, and informally, routines of cooperation between the EUSRs and the Commission have been established. As a result, there is today much closer regular cooperation between the two than when EUSRs began their work in the mid-1990s. A visible expression of this new cooperation was the system of task forces that had been set up to integrate the EUSRs, the Council Secretariat and the Commission in an effort to draw together all sources of specialised knowledge within the central EU institutions (International Crisis Group 2001: 45; see Hansen 2006: 41; Grevi 2007: 108). With the establishment of the EAS, this system has found its logical extension. For liaison in the field, the current set of guidelines stipulates close coordination, including regular briefings and mutual support (Council of the EU 2007f: 6). Given their role as somewhat detached from the Council's side, the EUSRs could at times act as an informal mediator between the Council and the Commission in external representation.

EUSRs usually receive logistical support such as office space on delegation premises for their political advisors in the field or informational support with regard to country-specific contacts. In return, the EUSR typically includes the EU head of delegation in his activities. While much of this cooperation takes place at an informal level, other instances are more formal. Early on, the EUSR for the MEPP, for example, produced a 'vision paper' as a longer-term strategy for the region together with the Commission (George 2000). Also the disbursement of the 'African Peace Facility' requires cooperation between the Commission and the PSC, thus building a bridge between the two pillars (Grevi 2007: 101).

This notwithstanding, the relationship is not free from competition, although the pre-Lisbon rivalry of the Commission and the Council for the position of number one European representative used to be more pronounced in Brussels. Here the legal division with different competencies in the two Treaty pillars was much more present, generating a widespread mutual lack of understanding. The illustrious 'two sides of Rue de la Loi' on which the Commission and the Council are located created the institutional reflex where by each side would start working on its own proposal before coming together and sharing information. The set-up of the EAS, headed by Lady Ashton as both High Representative and Commission Vice-President and located in its own building at the Rond Point Schuman at the end of the dividing Rue, is now meant to overcome this distance, both physical and mental, within the EU capital.

In the field, there is more room for pragmatism, which will still be needed even under Lisbon given the large array of external competencies remaining solely with the Commission. In the past, the two sides often felt unwillingly caught in a process dictated by the Treaty and sometimes contrary to the actual aims on the ground. When the political line is identical but institutional infighting is about responsibilities in implementation, operational questions become hostages of institutional arrangements and a good part of an outward-oriented project is directed towards overcoming Treaty barriers. For example, the training of the Congolese police ended in permanent makeshift because it had to be devised in parallel projects due to overlapping competences. Even with the EAS, there remains a need for close coordination with Commission activities such as humanitarian aid in crisis regions.

EUSRs have also helped to improve institutional interactions between the Commission and member states. Positively acting as boundary spanners, they have brought the different desks together. As a result, an EUSR 'is currently the most streamlined way in which the Commission and member states can coordinate through a single contact point in a complex crisis that threatens to become a conflict' (International Crisis Group 2005c: 43).

A major institutional innovation was the appointment in October 2005 of Erwan Fouéré, a Commission official of Irish nationality, as the new EUSR for Macedonia and, simultaneously, head of the Commission delegation (Council of the EU 2005d). The two mandates were of course distinct, but intended to be complementary: they both aimed at ensuring a lasting stabilisation of the country and supporting the transition from post-conflict reconstruction to pre-EU accession. This was the first time that such a personal union spanned the first and second pillars of EU policy as they were created under the Maastricht Treaty. This double-hatting was also a real-life test case of the 'EU Foreign Minister' that came with the Lisbon Treaty four years later.

The role of EUSRs in crisis management and EU integration

Summing up the findings of this paper, it is fair to say that the EUSRs have become an all-round instrument that the EU can flexibly deploy anywhere within its political reach (which is, admittedly, still limited to its broader vicinity). In terms of crisis management, there is hardly anything EUSRs do not do, stretching from classic diplomatic activities (like regional and multilateral collaboration, the supervision of human rights and the rule of law, as well as public diplomacy) to active engagement in conflict resolution (including through participation in peace negotiations, supervision of the implementation of international agreements, institution-building and security sector reform). More than just representing the Union abroad and enhancing the EU's standing, they embody the Union's approach to comprehensive crisis management, which is regarded as one of the hallmarks of the EU's international identity as a 'distinct power'.[4]

Despite being deployed on a mission abroad, EUSRs also work on the inside of the EU. Their mere presence obliges member states to devise a policy for a given country or region. They have raised the qualitative level of policy deliberations in Brussels by providing EU-made information, making decision-making bodies less dependent on information graciously given by larger member states (see Grevi 2007: 46). Furthermore, they help establish and consolidate a political position of the EU by internally straddling policy areas as well as institutions. This furthers an externally coherent stance, which again eases the EUSRs' cooperation in multilateral settings. By enhancing the synergy between the instruments and resources at the Union's disposal, in particular by coordinating EU actors such as CSDP missions on the ground, the EUSRs have greatly contributed to building a more integrated EU foreign policy.

This, in fact, can be regarded as the real success story of the EUSRs: they may not have pacified the conflict areas to which they were dispatched (note that other international organisations and powerful states failed in just the same way). But they helped to bring about internal policy coherence, paving the way for further institutional developments such as the EU Foreign Service established under the Lisbon Treaty. And they made a claim for the EU to be recognised as an actor in crisis management alongside powerful states and traditional institutions such as the US, Russia, the UN, the OSCE or NATO.

Before elaborating on this latter point with a view to the broader process of European integration, I will briefly extend the observations about the EUSRs' external as well as internal roles to a more structurally grounded analysis of the various roles they can assume. These roles are not meant to be prescriptive or in any way defining of what an envoy should (or should not) do. They rather serve as a means of illustrating, in more general terms, the many crisis management activities of the EUSRs.

The different roles of EUSRs

In addition to their internal and external dimensions, the roles of envoys can be structured around their degree of activity. The latter is here portrayed in two forms: presence and actorness. The concept of 'presence' was introduced to describe the status of the EC/EU without referring to it being an international actor equal to states or international organisations (Allen and Smith 1990). Or in other words: presence is more about 'being' than 'acting' (Bretherton and Vogler 1999: 33). The 'being' part can be further divided into factual presence as its most basic form and informational presence where the presence is used to either gather or distribute information. 'Actorness', in contrast, builds on concrete 'acting', either individually or intersubjectively.

Based on these categories of presence and actorness in an internal and external dimension, one can distinguish eight different roles that EUSRs can fulfil. Internally, presence refers to the fact that by their sheer existence, envoys oblige their sending institution to provide political guidance for them, i.e. to agree at least on a minimal policy. In addition, their presence on the ground provides information for policy analysis. Their internal actorness finds an expression in the ability to make policy proposals and to coordinate different EU agents. Externally, presence implies that the visibility itself of an actor raises expectations of third parties and, thus, can exert influence. This includes the dissemination of information insofar as it is not intended to have direct effect (see Bretherton and Vogler 1999: 5). External actorness is expressed both by individual activity and by cooperation with third parties. Here again, presence may also lead to a more operative policy (i.e. actorness) simply because there is someone present in the field to execute it (Regelsberger 1997: 221). Table 11.1 summarises the main roles that EUSRs fulfil.

Table 11.1 Eight different roles of EUSRs

	Presence		Actorness	
	Factual presence	*Informational presence*	*Individual actorness*	*Intersubjective actorness*
Internal				
-In capitals/headquarters -In the field	Obligation	Analysis	Proposals	Coordination
External				
-Towards conflict parties -Towards third parties	Visibility	Dissemination	Activity	Cooperation

Crisis management as an engine of EU integration

The significant internal dimension of the EUSRs' activity points to a more comprehensive observation of the development of EU foreign policy in general and of crisis management in particular: that it is not exclusively (maybe not even mainly) conceived towards the external world, but just as well to the EU's internal affairs.

From the time when Putnam conceptualised what he called 'two-level games' (Putnam 1988), the domestic relevance of foreign policy has been widely recognised. In the context of European integration, however, the importance of these two levels is a different one: whereas in the world of states the *international* level is about survival (at least in a neo-realist reading), for the European Union survival of the integration project will be determined at the *internal* level. To what extent a growing number of member states ('widening') can continue to integrate their policies ('deepening') will be decisive. Pressure from the international level – for example the weakened weight of member states due to globalisation and the rise of new powers such as India and China, or the demand for European action in what is perceived as a multipolar world (Solana 2008) – so far serves as a welcome line of reasoning rather than an (already) existential threat.

It is therefore reasonable to view the EU's growing global engagement not only as a response to external crises but also as a means to rally member states around a common cause. As early as in the Single European Act of 1986, EU heads of state and government publicly stated the expectation (in Title III, Art. 30, No. 6(a)) 'that closer co-operation on questions of European security would contribute in an essential way to the development of a European identity in external policy matters' (European Economic Community 1986). Hindsight confirms this ambition to create an identity through common action, both in establishing CFSP and by promoting other external policies such as enlargement (Tonra 2001: 15; Smith 2003: 9; Sedelmeier 2003: 6).

By providing a focal point for a given crisis or region and by thus creating the need to give common instructions to them, the EUSRs help create common viewpoints within a multilateral frame of reference (Ginsberg and Smith 2007: 269). A 'habit of coordination', first noticed with regard to the closed circles of foreign ministers and their political directors in the early days of European Political Cooperation (de Schoutheete de Tervarent 1980; Nuttall 1992) and later detected in the group of ambassadors assembling as the Committee of Permanent Representatives in Brussels (Checkel 2005; Lewis 2003) as well as the Political and Security Committee (Juncos and Reynolds 2007), can also be found among those dealing with the EUSRs. The permanent interaction in Brussels over time should create a sense of belonging to a common endeavour and of shared ownership of foreign policy initiatives (Grevi 2007: 33).

The instrument of EU Special Representatives therefore confirms the importance of the internal function of foreign policy. Even though the EUSRs' many internal tasks are not always explicitly spelled out in the mandate, it could be shown that in practice these are at least as important as the external tasks:

- coordinating member states' policies as well as CSDP operations on the ground;
- encouraging the development of common policies by providing information and analysis;
- acting as bridge-builders across institutional and political divides.

Thus, CFSP is rightly viewed as a driver of European integration, just as political integration also furthers closer cooperation in foreign policy. Ultimately, the question of how the EU

foreign service would look like or where and how the EU will engage next in crisis manage-ment will also be answered with a view to their integration potential rather than by merely looking at the EAS's needs or the EU's problem-solving capacity.

Notes

1   This article is based on research carried out between 2006 and 2008 as part of the European Foreign and Security Policy Studies Programme of Compagnia di San Paolo, Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, and Volkswagen Foundation, whose support is gratefully acknowledged. For an extensive over-view of the work of EU Special Representatives and how they have contributed to learning and change in European foreign policy, see Adebahr (2009).

2   The more formal launch of the Quartet took place in April 2002 in Madrid during the Spanish EU presidency with a meeting of the four principals; until then, only the respective special envoys had met as the Quartet.

3   By this time EU funding had reached around 500 million euros a year, over half of which was provided by the EC budget and the remainder bilaterally by EU member states (cf. European Commission 2005a: 2).

4   The term 'distinct' is used here to relate to the various concepts to describe the EU's particular approach to foreign policy that have been developed ever since François Duchêne declared the European Community a 'civilian power' (Duchêne 1972, 1973). Different EU-specific elabora-tions of Joseph Nye's 'soft power' concept (Nye 1990) propose for example a civilian superpower (Whitman 1998), a normative power (Manners 2002), a smart power (Ferrero-Waldner 2007), a gentle power (Lucarelli 2006) and an ethical power Europe (Aggestam 2008).