

## EU Special Representatives

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The Council of the European Union appoints EUSRs under the authority of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, to advise and support national and regional political processes. As of August 2011, the European Union had eight EUSRs that are either based in Brussels or have an in-country presence in Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sudan, Central Asia, Georgia, Afghanistan, the Great Lakes Region and the African Union. This marks a reduction from twelve last year, following the closure of EUSRs in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, the Middle East and the South Caucasus.

Indeed, the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS) following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty has generated debate about the continued need for EU Special Representatives. On one hand, merging the functions of the EUSR with those of the head of the EU delegation would streamline European Union activities in crisis countries. On the other hand, it has been argued that the consolidation may come at the cost of weakened political flexibility and leverage. The regional mandates of the EUSRs for Central Asia and Great Lakes provide additional versatility that country-specific ambassadors do not have.

Nonetheless, the decision by the European Union not to name EUSRs for the recent crises in Cote d'Ivoire (where there is EU Delegation) and Libya (where an EU Office under the EEAS was established in Benghazi in May 2011), or for the Horn of Africa, where the European Union runs anti-piracy operations – as well as ongoing discussions on whether to close the EUSR for the Great Lakes Region – suggest that further consolidation of EUSRs may be underway.

One option for reconciling EUSRs and EU Delegations is “double-hatting.” In Afghanistan and at the African Union, the EUSR also functions as the head of the EEAS delegation. Under this arrangement, the EU Delegation is financed from the EEAS administrative budget, but through it the EUSR can access the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) budget, which, due to its size and different oversight arrangements, enables the EU to more flexibly finance its missions. Such an arrangement is currently under consideration in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where the EU maintains a sizable military and police presence. In Kosovo, too, the interim appointment of an EUSR from within the ranks of the EEAS suggests adaptation of EUSRs, rather than their replacement.