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## European Leadership in Transition and Crisis

Edited by Lisbeth Aggestam

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EUROPEAN LEADERSHIP  
IN  
TRANSITION AND CRISIS

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## Foreword

This publication is the outcome of a panel discussion on European leadership during *Almedalsveckan* (the Almedalen Week) on 4 July 2014. I am grateful to the Swedish Political Science Association (SWEPSA) for financial support, and in particular to the former President of SWEPSA, Professor Jonas Hinnfors, for encouraging me to convene this panel as part of ‘Statsvetardagen’ (the day of Political Science). I would also like to thank Angie Sohlberg at The Red Thread for the panel transcription.

*Almedalsveckan* is a key event in the Swedish political calendar, when all major political parties, interest groups, academia and various organizations gather in the small Hanseatic city of Visby, on the island of Gotland, to debate and discuss politics for a week. *Almedalsveckan* 2014 attracted a particularly large audience as it preceded the national Swedish elections that took place just two months later. However, the time when politics could be seen in purely national terms is long gone. Less than two months prior to *Almedalen*, the elections to the European Parliament were held with a new constellation of political parties gaining ground. Throughout Europe, there are rising tensions and conflicts, not least in Eastern Europe with the crisis in Ukraine and the Russian annexation of Crimea. During this time, the European Union has been going through a period of transition, which has involved a change of leadership at the helm of the organization. This paper focuses on what kind of leadership is necessary, possible and desirable to meet the serious political challenges that the European Union is facing on the international arena.

I want to thank the panellists for kindly accepting the invitation to participate on the panel and to contribute to this publication:

- *Mikaela Kumlin-Granit*: Swedish diplomat and Head of the EU Department at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
- *Christian Leffler*: The Managing Director for the Americas at the European External Action Service (EEAS).
- *Christophe Hillion*: Professor of European law at the University of Leiden.
- *Adrian Hyde-Price*: Professor of International Politics at the University of Gothenburg.

The panellists all have links with the Centre for European Research at the University of Gothenburg (CERGU). They demonstrate the commitment and fruitful exchange that can and should exist between policy practitioners and academics to address some of the most complex issues in contemporary European politics.

*Lisbeth Aggestam*

*Senior Lecturer at the Centre for European Research at Gothenburg University*

# 1 Introduction

*Lisbeth Aggestam (University of Gothenburg)*

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In the wake of the crisis in Ukraine, the question of whether the European Union is able to speak with ‘one voice’ and exercise leadership on one of the most serious issues affecting European security and order since the end of the Cold War has been raised with great urgency. Leadership that guides the action of its 28 member states is widely seen as a condition for the EU being able to act coherently and consistently in global affairs. At this critical juncture in its existence, the European Union has appointed new institutional leaders in 2014: (1) President Jean-Claude Juncker of the European Commission, (2) President Donald Tusk of the European Council, and (3) High Representative Frederica Mogherini for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. As the process of appointment recently showed, the choice of individuals for these top posts at the helm of the European Union has become increasingly politicised and controversial.

The specific focus in this paper is the role played by the High Representative (HR) in EU foreign policy and external relations and what leadership the European Union can provide on the global stage of politics. The European Union is currently facing a number of serious international challenges. To the East, the Ukraine crisis continues unabated and raises the question of whether the EU can take a common position in its relations with Russia. To the South, instability in many parts of the MENA-region continues to fester. The Syrian civil war and challenges in the Middle East peace process pose challenges and questions of whether the European Union member states can act coherently and consistently in this volatile region. In the rest of the world, there are profound power shifts in global order with rising powers that underline the declining position of the European Union. Arguably, acting together within the European Union has a greater impact than acting on your own in this new milieu.

These international challenges raise the old Kissinger question of whether the European Union can speak with ‘one voice’ – or at the very least – project a common message and position on a number of crucial global issues.

The Lisbon Treaty of 2009 introduced a number of substantial reforms aimed at improving the EU’s coherence and consistency in foreign policy. Significantly, the rotating Presidency – which previously served as the main locus of coordination and leadership in EU foreign policy – was scrapped in favour of a significant strengthening of the post of the EU High Representative. This is quite significant given how intimately linked foreign policy is to sovereignty and the nation-state. Leadership is a highly charged and sensitive topic in Europe, particularly in the field of foreign and security policy, which historically has been shrouded in national symbolism. Foreign policy still

enjoys a strong association to the executive function of national government as an arena for national politicians to demonstrate decisive leadership skills for domestic consumption. The rotating Presidency used to provide Member States, particularly smaller and medium-sized member states, like Sweden, a unique opportunity to directly manage and set the agenda in EU foreign policy during a six-month period. This no longer exists.

While the EU High Representative by no means is an 'EU foreign minister', the Lisbon Treaty of 2009 introduced and delegated significant leadership functions to the European level in EU foreign policy-making:

- To set the agenda and ensure implementation of decisions in the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP);
- To coordinate EU external relations as Vice-President of the European Commission;
- To represent the EU in international organizations and in relations with Third parties; and
- To head the European External Action Service (EEAS).

The aim of all these reforms has been to try to reinforce greater continuity and coherence of the EU as a global actor. But how did it turn out? How should we evaluate the last five years since the Lisbon Treaty came into force? What kind of leadership has Lady Catherine Ashton as the High Representative been able to provide? How has the creation of the European External Action Service improved the chances of a more coherent EU leadership in global affairs? And given the Lisbon Treaty reforms – what leadership role do member states still play in EU foreign policy?

These questions were discussed on the panel at *Almedalen* with speakers who have extensive practical experience and great knowledge of the contested nature of leadership in the European Union. Each panellist was asked to reflect on a specific question and issue. The structure of presentations proceeded from European to more national perspectives. This paper follows this order. In the second part of this paper, Christophe Hillion (University of Leiden) analyses the legal reforms that the Lisbon Treaty contains regarding the formal leadership function and assesses whether they have brought greater coherence and consistency to EU external relations. This analysis draws on a large research project that Hillion has headed at the Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies (SIEPS). In the third part, Christian Leffler (EEAS) reflects on the challenging birth of the European External Action Service (EEAS) as a new and unique diplomatic structure within the European Union. Leffler was centrally involved in advising the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on the many intricate issues involved in the creation of the EEAS and he has a long distinguished career as a diplomat in Brussels. The following parts of the paper move on to national perspectives. In the fourth part, Mikaela Kumlin-Granit explains why Sweden is an ardent supporter of the Lisbon reforms to strengthen

the position of the High Representative and the EEAS. Her analysis draws on her extensive experience of having worked centrally as a Swedish diplomat during the two Swedish Presidencies in 2001 and 2009, as well as her work in the cabinet of the former President of the European Council, Herman van Rompuy. In the fifth part, Adrian Hyde-Price (University of Gothenburg) discusses the role of the big EU member states and argues that although they have acted together on some issues, they do not constitute a cohesive ‘directoire’ in EU foreign policy. This conclusion is drawn from Hyde-Price’s longstanding research and publications on European security. The paper concludes with a discussion on transactional and transformational leadership styles and looks ahead to the major challenges that the new EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy is facing over the next five years of her mandate.

## 2 Reforming the formal leadership function

*Christophe Hillion (University of Leiden)*

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The Treaty of Lisbon introduced several adaptations to the EU system of external relations, with the aim of furthering the coherence and efficiency of the EU external action, in line with the mandate given to the 2007 IGC. I will briefly mention three such adaptations, and then make a few comments on their actual contribution to coherence.

One may begin with the Union’s High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. It is not an entirely new creature in the EU, but its role has been changed. Under the new dispensation, it concentrates responsibilities that until Lisbon were divided between the Commissioner for External Relations, the High Representative for CFSP, and the rotating presidency of the EU Foreign Affairs Council. According to Article 18 of the Treaty on the European Union, the mandate of the new High Representative is impressive. The incumbent conducts the foreign policy of the European Union, ensures the consistency between the external policies of the European Union as well between external and internal policies, and chairs the Foreign Affairs Council. The thought of the *constituants* was that, endowed with this wide and multifaceted mandate, the new High Representative-Vice president of the Commission would have the ability to take initiative across the whole spectrum of EU’s external competence – as president of the Foreign Affairs Council steer the discussion until the adoption of any EU external initiative, thus contributing to a more comprehensive and integrated EU action.

The second significant and related adaptation to the EU system of external relations is the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS), which is to support the High Representative in her different functions. The EEAS is the administrative translation of



the multi-hatting of the HR. The EEAS basically brings together the hitherto distinct services that were previously involved in the development of the EU's external action pre-Lisbon. Thus, the relevant services of the Commission (e.g. the old 'DG Relex'), of the Council Secretariat General (e.g. 'DG E'), and some member states' diplomats were assembled within one bureaucracy in the hope of assisting the High Representative in developing comprehensive and integrated EU external policies.

Third, the Treaty of Lisbon attempted to streamline the legal, normative and teleological framework within which the EU is supposed to develop its external action. This is partly the result of the so-called 'depillarization' of the treaties underpinning the European Union. While the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) remains as a separate legal order, the external action of the Union is nonetheless conducted by the EU through a single legal personality, and no longer through various EC and EU procedural frameworks, in their respective fields of competence. In addition, the treaty of Lisbon established a single normative framework for the Union's external action: while the objectives of the EU and EC external policies were previously found in various parts of the EU and EC treaties, these objectives are now assembled in one single article, thus streamlining the teleological framework within which the EU institutions develop EU action towards the rest of the world.

In sum, the EU external action has in principle a figurehead with a comprehensive mandate, and an administration to help her develop a coherent external action, in the light of a streamlined normative framework. Having said this, the first five years of implementation of the Lisbon Treaty suggest that the actual contribution of these new devices to enhancing the coherence of the EU external action remains somewhat mixed.

First of all, the new High Representative's role is simply too big and too demanding for one single person. It is too much for the same person to cope with what used to be three full-time jobs. In effect, the HR is expected to be in many different places at the same time, which, at the end of the day, means that she ends up being everywhere and nowhere. Thus, it is very difficult for her to assume her coordination responsibilities within the Commission, while at the same time representing the Union on the global stage. Moreover, various other actors in the EU system of external relations have overshadowed her role as figurehead of the external action of the Union. In areas other than the CFSP, other commissioners, including the President, represent the EU on the global stage. Even in the area of the CFSP, the HR shares the limelight with the president of the European Council, who legally and in practice has also had a prominent role to represent the Union in the area of CFSP. Indeed, the division of tasks between these different actors is not clear in the treaty, and has thus been organized on an ad hoc basis.

An additional disappointment with respect to the post-Lisbon arrangements is that the right of initiative, with which the HR has legally be endowed with in the area of CFSP, has been very restrictively interpreted by the incumbent. Instead of being a pro-active



policy entrepreneur, using the external action service, the HR has remained essentially reactive to specific mandates coming from member states. In other words, the wider HR/VP mandate has been under-exploited.

Moreover, several organizational flaws have hampered the HR function as chair of the Foreign Affairs Council. First of all, the delimitation between the Foreign Affairs Council remit and that of the General Affairs Council, which is not chaired by the High Representative, is unclear. For example, while the Foreign Affairs Council deals with EU relations with the Western Balkans, the EU enlargement policy, which concerns the latter countries, falls within the remit of the General Affairs Council. There has been an ambiguous, and in any event, artificial division of tasks within the council machinery, making the presidency to the Foreign Affairs Council less useful than it could have been in terms of ensuring the consistency of EU external policies. In the same vein, the working groups operating under the Foreign Affairs Council are not all chaired by EEAS staff (i.e. personnel related to the HR). Some, like the working groups on development and trade, have remained chaired by the rotating presidency of the Council, while others are chaired by staff from the Secretariat General of the Council, or by a permanent chairperson from outside the EEAS. This variety has made coordination more difficult, and has not contributed to streamlining the preparation of the EU's external action, and ultimately its coherence.

These brief examples suggest that much remain to be done in organizational and practical terms to furthering the coherence and efficiency of the EU external action on the basis of the Lisbon Treaty.

### 3 Developing the European External Action Service

*Christian Leffler (EEAS)*

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We have seen over the past five years, since the enforcement of the Lisbon Treaty, what we have seen almost every other time that there was a new treaty – Amsterdam, Nice – that there is a backlash. The member states ask themselves, ‘Did we really agree to this? We can’t have. Surely not.’ And that is stronger this time because the Lisbon Treaty involved significant reforms to the roles played by those responsible for overseeing and concluding the negotiation that led to the treaty. The prime ministers and the foreign ministers, they are the ones who rule themselves out of their traditional roles. The prime ministers handed over the permanent chair of the European Council to the president of that council, and the foreign ministers gave the permanent chairing role and coordinating

role to the new High Representative and Vice President of the Commission. So no one is really getting their moment of glory to chair Foreign and European Council meetings. All of the other ministers - finance ministers, transport ministers, energy, cultural, whatever - they have their own councils, they have their Presidency, but not prime ministers and not foreign ministers. So they have said frequently, 'We can't really have agreed to that. That's not really what we did. There must be some way of giving us a role, too.' I think one needs to bear that context in mind, because that explains some of the ambivalence and some of the tension between member states and institutions in the implementation of the treaty.

The role of the European External Action Service (EEAS) is basically quite straightforward. The treaty states that the EEAS is there to assist to the High Representative and Vice President in achieving her objectives. What she wants, we do. We try to back her up on that. It is in some ways similar to the role of a foreign ministry. We are trying to be good in terms of reporting and analysis, with the help of our common EU-delegations throughout the world. Based on that reporting and analysis, we are strategizing. Maybe not quite as proactive as Christophe and others would have liked, sometimes far more proactive than some others would want. Coordination, coordination, coordination – that is an essential part of any foreign service. The difference at the European level is that it is multidimensional coordination. Take the Swedish foreign office: it constantly coordinates with all other ministries to see that there is a coherent Swedish projection abroad. We do that across all the departments of the Commission, and the other EU institutions in Brussels, but we also do it in the member states. And, to be perfectly frank, partly for the reasons I mentioned, the more challenging task is coordinating with member states. The other problem we have is our interdepartmental rivalries, but that is part of any bureaucracy, any administration.

With member states, it is challenging, for a number of reasons. It is new. Foreign policy remains very close to the self-perception of what it is to be a state. If you are a state, you have a foreign policy. Regardless of whether you are Luxembourg, or Germany, or Britain, or whatever. You feel if you don't have a foreign policy, you don't have a state. So saying that we should coordinate in a single framework comes very close to touching on core issues of sovereignty. States also have different interests. We have to seek to accommodate those interests in a common framework without just remaining at the level of the lowest common denominator.

However, the infamous quote from Henry Kissinger about 'who to call if I want to speak to Europe' is a particularly silly question, because if we ask the same about Washington, nobody can give an answer. Is it the State Department, is it the National Security Council, is it the Department of Defence, or should we actually call Congress? Answer is: all of the above. On the EU level, although we have the added trouble of having 28 supplementary numbers around the continent, the objective was never to actually just

speaking with 'one voice'. My former boss, Chris Patten, when he was External Relations Commissioner, frequently made the point that there is actually a difference between a *single* policy and a *common* policy. The EU has a single trade policy. Only the Commission represents the EU in international trade forums. Member states are present, but they are there as witnesses. Silent witnesses. Foreign policy is a common policy. Everyone has their voice. The essential challenge is to make sure that they all have common messages, or to put it more poetically, that we sing from the same note sheet. When we do that well, when we sing in tune, it can be quite effective. When we don't, everybody hears the awful noise it makes. And that is the one, sadly, that we tend to remember.

Leadership in a period of transition or a crisis creates particular challenges of continuity. How do we make sure there is continuity in the service remnant, in the messages passed, and in the leadership offered? And crisis, focus again on coordination. How do we provide the focus? And how do we achieve coordination? Continuity, making sure as far as possible, that the leaders, even the outgoing ones, are still effective in their roles. We have a particularly long transition and renewal period in the European institutions starting with the European Parliament elections in May and ending, if all goes well, with the appointment of a new President of the Commission, a new High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and a new President of the European Council. The High Representative Lady Ashton remains very active. She continues to conduct the international negotiations in Iran on finding an agreement on weapons of mass destruction, while respecting their right for developing civilian nuclear power. That is a good example of leadership and coordination. It was a process that started with an initiative ten years ago of three member states. When it grew bigger than they expected, they were quite happy to shift the issue over to the then High Representative, Javier Solana. We have since built a process where it is not just leadership at the European level, but the HR-VP with the support of EEAS, leads the international efforts on this, with the United States, with Russia, and with China.

The current Ukraine crisis has provided a huge challenge in terms of leadership and coordination, but also some successes. I think if you look at it, you can actually say that in the transatlantic relationship, there is European leadership in this crisis related to the United States. The United States are there trying to egg us on, trying to ask us to do more, but they are waiting for Europe to lead, and they are going in behind the European positions, giving them their own reflection, their own interpretations, sometimes going a little bit further, wanting to issue something, holding back – but it is essentially a process led by Europe. It is a very complex one. It is one where many member states have huge sensitivities, economic, political ones, and therefore keeping everyone together in a common conceptual framework has proven difficult. On the whole, that framework still holds, with a few excursions, politically and intellectually by some leaders and some ministers, but I think, in huge crisis situations like these, they are almost inevitable. Our

role there is to try to look ahead, try to forecast where this might be going, try to identify where the key European interests lie - short term, medium term, long term - so that we don't jump to short term decisions that we may regret in the medium term or long term when we see what those consequences are. And then attempting to do the didactic work of communicating this with our member states, working it through at the different levels of the Union working groups, the Political and Security Committee (PSC), the Council of Ministers, and even the European Council. This is one of the first times the European Council has really taken appropriation of a foreign and security policy issue in that sense. Are we successful, will we ultimately be successful? Sadly, the crisis isn't over yet, so we have many occasions to come back to this.

## 4 Beyond the rotating EU Presidency: Swedish perspectives

*Mikaela Kumlin-Granit (Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs)*

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First of all, speaking from a Swedish perspective, we think that we have the most to win with a strong EU structure in foreign policy. This is our analysis and that is why we have always been extremely supportive towards the EU structures and institutions. So I will say that we have been vocal in our support of the High Representative. We have also been very supportive of the development of the EEAS from the start - despite all the problems. We, for instance, were one of the driving forces in the EEAS review. We also had success in getting the decision that during the next High Representative mandate, there would be collaboration on a European global strategy setting out a European vision and framework for what the EU should do on the foreign policy side.

My second point raises the question whether it is easier for Sweden to seek influence in the new structures, or whether it was easier during the rotating presidencies. Personally, I must say that the six months of shine, sunshine, was fabulous. I mean, for six months we organized major summits on the Euro, with the US President Obama, and we had a summit with the Russian President Medvedev. It was fantastic. We also had six months where we could push our initiatives with the support of the institutions, and also with the support of the member states. Although I am slightly joking here, Swedish diplomats like myself, we had a blast and I will always miss that. However, at the end of the day, the issues and the initiatives that we managed to pass during the EU presidency were probably more limited, because the EU did not have the influence that I think it will have in a couple of more years of strengthening the structures. And you had to wait for your national presidency. It is between 10-15 years between every Presidency, so with the new Lisbon structures, I think a country like Sweden still has much to gain. Strong European

structure which are conducive to more coherence, is something that we as a medium-sized country value. When you finally get an imprint and successfully influence the agenda, the effect is much larger.

Another thing, which I would like to point out, is that the EEAS delegations are probably one of the biggest success stories so far. I think we are waiting for more, but this development is really a good thing. The EEAS delegations help countries like Sweden to be in places where we really don't have resources to be on our own. We are continuously working on coordination and co-location in this sense. Can we then scrap our national foreign ministries now that we have this new diplomatic structure? I say no. On the other hand, we have to become even better. We have to have strong political leadership and strong foreign ministers that want to work with the EU. We need professional diplomats that can really understand how the system works. We also need to work much more efficiently and effectively in the coordination process of daily issues, but also to take part in the development so that we see that the External Action Service develops in a way that we want to see. So it is also a broader engagement.

I also want to get back to what Christian mentioned earlier – I think one of the biggest and most important factors is the continuity aspect, of having a permanent High Representative on a mandate for five years is very important. The breakthrough between Kosovo and Serbia would never have happened if we did not have this continuity of leadership. This is probably something that we will see much more of eventually.

Finally, my third point on European leadership in the world - I think it is very important for us to remember that leadership is something different for the EU than when it comes from the member states. The EU will never be the US. We don't have Obama. The EU will never be Russia. EU leadership is something else and works in other ways. If you look at the Ukraine issue, for instance, originally, what made things happen there were not so much national issues of the member states, it was, as we always talk of, the famous soft power – the pull factor – that pushed events. So the EU is much more than just personal leadership. This said, of course, more can be done by the EU and here again, I would like to mirror what Christian said that the challenge is not so much to speak with one voice – it is to let all these 28 voices and institutions speak and act, but with the same message and consistency of action. That is really what is the largest challenge here. The challenge is to use the capacity in a coherent way. We have all the instruments, but we need the coherence factor and the political will to make this work. Another challenge is that the demand for European engagement is growing by the day and it is a challenge for the EU High Representative to be in so many places at the same time.

Looking ahead, we see these new personalities and this new set up of leaders at the top of the EU. I have great hopes that with the new Commission, with the new High Representative, and the new President of the European Council, we will move to a new

stage in the development the EU as a foreign policy actor. And I tend to believe that there will be a great leap, because we have a new context now. Five years ago, we had a different context. We had competition between two new actors – the Commission and the High Representative, but also with the President of the European Council. I think we are in a new situation now. We have also seen what doesn't work and what does work.

## 5 Leadership and the role of large EU Member States

*Adrian Hyde-Price (University of Bath)*

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When I was asked to speak about European leadership on this panel, I could not help thinking of Mahatma Gandhi. When Gandhi was asked by a journalist, ‘So, what do you think of western civilization?’, his response was: ‘I think it would be a good idea.’ Because we are certainly in a situation when European leadership is needed and required. We face a series of crises in and around Europe, from the Ukraine conflict, civil war in Syria, ISIS in Iraq, etc. We face a whole string of problems within Europe to do with the Eurozone, and with austerity and social injustice. At the same time, we are facing a situation in which the United States is refocusing its attention on Asia; it is tilting, pivoting to Asia, in order to deal with the issue of the rise of China, which is part of a much broader process of power transition in the wider international system. Consequently, a lot more is now expected of European leadership to deal with our own problems, and to deal with problems in our own neighbourhood, our own backyard. Much of the focus when discussing European leadership is on the ‘big three’: Britain, France and Germany. In this regard, let me make four brief points:

The first is that clearly the role of the big three - Germany, France and the United Kingdom - is crucial for developing clear leadership and clear strategies in Europe. When, as Christian said, the big three work together, things happen. The prime example would be the initiative in 2003 that led the ‘EU Three’ to take the lead in seeking to negotiate a resolution to the problem of the secretive and opaque Iranian uranium enrichment program. This was a diplomatic initiative of considerable importance and significance, even if the final outcome was disappointing.

This takes me to my second point. The problem with leadership from the big three is that they are actually divided on some crucial and fundamental interests. To put it into academic jargon, the problem here is ‘trilateral asymmetries’. The fact of the matter is that on some issues, two of the three are close. Look at France and the United Kingdom: both members of the UN Security Council, both nuclear weapon states, both with a pretty

robust attitude to the use of military force, and both with pretty strong interests in their former colonies. On the other hand, Britain and France, until relatively recently, have seemed to agree on very little. There is something in our chemistry that has generated a problematic relationship. Most importantly, they have traditionally disagreed on attitudes to the European integration process, to NATO, and towards the transatlantic relationship. On the other hand, France and Germany have been very close in terms of their attitude towards building Europe: they have always been the core motor of the European integration process. However, they differ on a range of issues, particularly when it comes to defence, military intervention, and NATO. UK and Germany, on the other hand, have differed on approaches to EU integration, but in many other issues they are quite close. Indeed, the relationship has been described as the *Stille Allianz* - the 'quiet alliance' – given the many complementarities between Britain and Germany, not least in their commitment to an open global trading system. But my main point here is these trilateral asymmetries mean that amongst the big three, there is all too rarely agreement on major foreign and security policy issues.

This takes me to my third point which is that this problem of trilateral asymmetries is actually a great opportunity for small and medium sized states, because success in foreign and security policy depends on two things: It depends on raw power capabilities, i.e., how strong you are, how big your army is, how strong your economy is, all these traditional indices of power capabilities. But, perhaps more importantly, it depends on political will, i.e., how strongly a state believes in a particular set of interests, and pushes for them. And what we have seen time and time again is that the small and medium sized states, if they feel strongly on an issue and push hard, and are coherent in their arguments and strategy, can get their way in the face of larger, more powerful states. So if we look at European foreign and security policy, it is quite clear that a country like Sweden has exerted considerable influence. To use a well-known British expression, Sweden is a country that has consistently 'punched above its weight'. This is partly because of the quality of the Swedish foreign ministry. If you look at another case – Poland for example - it has also been an influential country when it comes to the European Union, particularly because it feels very strongly on a number of issues and pushes hard for them. So what we have in European foreign and security policy is actually a more complex picture than simply leadership by the major powers. There is no domination by the big three, there is no *directoire*. Sometimes one might wish there was greater coherence amongst the big three. But the fact of the matter is that there isn't. This takes me to my final point:

If we expect European leadership to come from within EU institutions - and I say this with the greatest respect to my fellow panel members - well, we are looking in the wrong place. European leadership is never going to come simply from within the EU. If we look at the Ukraine crisis, for example, it has been managed by a number of different institutional fora and organisations, acting in a number of different ways. What we have seen is the involvement of a variety of multilateral organisations. The European Union is



clearly and undoubtedly an essential player, but it is not the only one, and sometimes, it is not the most significant one. In Ukraine we have seen an important role being played by the OSCE (the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe). NATO has also had a role to play in providing reassurance to the EU's eastern members. We then see the role of bilateral diplomacy- Germany here clearly the central player, and has been at the heart of European diplomacy over Ukraine, seeking to manage the Ukraine crisis and engage with the Russians. Germany therefore provides a core focus for diplomacy interactions. But what we also see are various other fora being used, for example, what are sometimes called 'mini-lateralism'. An example would be the so-called 'Weimar Triangle'. The Weimar Triangle of Germany, France and Poland, played a crucial role back in February 2014 when the three foreign ministers negotiated a deal which sought to end the conflict, but which, in the end, came to nothing. Nonetheless, they were trying to play a mediating role in the Ukraine crisis. More recently we have seen the German and the French foreign ministers talking to their Russian and Ukrainian counterparts. Thus, what we see in Europe is the use of a variety of different fora and institutions. Collective European leadership, in my view, will come not from one actor and not from one institution: rather, it will emerge – if at all – from the interaction of a number of actors in this complex institutional ensemble that exists in Europe today. It will not simply come from the European Union. I would argue that that would be, and should be, the key institution, but that it will be one player amongst many. The crucial institutional relationship in contemporary Europe is that between the European Union and NATO - these are the two crucial institutions and close coordination between both of them is vital for the overall success of European leadership.

My very final point would be this: that as we look to the future, we recognize - as all the panel speakers have stressed - the undoubted need for European leadership. All European diplomats should think of the words of Samuel Beckett, the great playwright and someone very appropriate in this context who wrote in both English and French. Samuel Beckett was the author of *Waiting for Godot*: some might suggest that waiting for European leadership is rather like waiting for Godot! However, on a more positive note, I think that European diplomats should look to Samuel Beckett's words in 'Westward-Ho', when he wrote: 'Ever tried, ever failed? No matter. Try again, fail again. Fail better.' That should be the mantra of all European diplomats as they try to work to produce effective European leadership.

## 6 Concluding discussion

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*Lisbeth Aggestam:* In the final concluding discussion, the panellists were asked to reflect more specifically on what type and style of leadership would be desirable and feasible in EU foreign policy and external relations. Leadership in EU foreign policy is challenging and often contested. This is why I often metaphorically describe the attempt to exercise leadership in EU foreign policy to be as hard as trying to herd cats. The American Harvard professor, Joseph Nye, recently published a book entitled *Presidential leadership and the Creation of the American Era* (2013), which builds on MacGregor Burns (1978) classic distinction between transactional and transformational leadership. Transactional leadership is task-oriented, while a transformational leadership style is visionary. The point that Nye raises in his book is that while an effective leader needs to be able to play both roles, given the contextual nature of leadership, transactional leadership is by far the most effective in terms of achieving outcomes that match the interests and objectives in foreign policy. The concluding panel discussion also included answers to questions raised by the audience on Britain and the EU, Swedish influence in the EU and whether the EU needs a ‘European Obama’.

*Christian Leffler:* Foreign policy is generally not a very contentious area in national politics. Not in Sweden and not in most other European countries. Foreign policy is essentially about having an effective machinery for projecting your interests. And there, I do think, Sweden actually does rather well compared to other countries. I would not say which ones I think punch below their weight, but there are several. A European Obama is an interesting concept. I guess some people would say that the attempt made five years ago, when the attempt was made to push Tony Blair into that role was a kind of European Obama moment. It was very clear that European leaders did not want an Obama. Would it have been more visionary? Well, yes, and maybe that is a term that one could apply, but the vision has to be turned into practice. And a lot of EU is about transaction, which is why I think I would favour transactional leadership.

*Christophe Hillion:* On the Obama question, I come from a country where there is a very strong support for formidable leaders. We have a very strong presidential regime in France. And it has a lot of flaws. In this day and age, thinking that one personality can lead the show is somewhat deceptive. I believe, especially in the European context, with 28 different member states, that what really counts is far more coordination between the different players and having a sense of direction. I don't think that depends on one single person. So, I would not like to see a European Obama, but that is a personal view. On Swedish foreign policy, I would like to point out that, if there are two areas where the European Union has been regarded as particularly influential, it is in EU enlargement policy, and the European Neighbourhood Policy- at least to some extent. And in these

two areas, Sweden has been extremely influential because it has been very supportive both of enlargement and of an active European Neighbourhood Policy, particularly towards the East. That might explain why Sweden is so highly graded in the European Council of Foreign Relations (ECFR) scoreboard on leadership and influence in EU foreign policy (<http://www.ecfr.eu/scorecard/2014>).

*Mikaela Kumlin-Granit:* First on the ECFR-report; we are very happy and proud of that score. But I think one should actually take a distance to this report, which was done in a period when we did not have a huge crisis, like the one over Ukraine and Russia. When you have a major issue like that, influence tends to be exerted from larger countries. I think it also has to do with personality in this case. With Carl Bildt as Foreign Minister, he was ambitious, he knows the EU and how to play it, and he has a large international network. On Swedish foreign policy, it is worth noting that there is a strong incentive to have a consensus, particularly between the Moderate Party and the Social Democrats on foreign policy related to the EU. However, we may have a very complicated parliamentary situation after the election with different parties looking at cutting defence expenditure for instance. And do we want Obama? Well, it depends on what post because having an Obama as the President of the European Council can't be the case because the role of the President is more of a facilitator to enable compromises between the Heads of EU governments. Someone like Blair would never land in that job so that is a hypothetical question. An Obama as President of the Commission? Maybe that could have been easier. But I agree there as well. This is not something that European leaders want. Then finally some advice for the next HR. First of all, focus less on administration. I think the new High Representative will have the support of a fully developed EEAS so there will be more room for other things. Second, make full use of the double-hatting with the new Commission President. Thirdly, make use of member states for deputies so that you can actually project your presence in different ways at the same time.

*Adrian Hyde-Price:* Briefly, let me note that, as one of the audience observed, the UK has always been seen as the awkward partner in its relationship to Europe and the European Union. But I would argue that today, 'awkward' does not begin to get close to the difficulties that Britain has now with the European Union. I also think we need to recognise that in the UK, at the moment, there is a sort of interregnum, a period 'in between', a period of considerable uncertainty. We have in September 2014 the referendum on Scottish independence. It is just too close to call at the moment. It is hard to know what will happen. But if Scotland leaves the UK and becomes an independent state, a London-based government will have to look inwards to address the problems that arise from this. But more importantly, we would have then the likelihood of continued conservative governments in England and Wales for the foreseeable future, and inevitably this would mean a referendum on UK membership of the EU. And the outcome on the referendum of British membership in the European Union may well result in the London-based government of England and Wales, leaving the EU. This would leave a smaller

United Kingdom outside of the European Union and an independent Scotland within the European Union. It is an extraordinary prospect with all sorts of unforeseeable ramifications. One final point I would note, again in response to a question from the audience, is the critical importance to the UK of the relationship with France. In terms of security and defence policy, this has become of very great significance, and almost amounts to a British pivot away from the previous focus with the Americans and towards France. For the future of European security and defence, this is a development of potentially very great significance.