To What Ends EU Foreign Policy?
Contending Approaches to the Union’s Diplomatic Objectives and Representation

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Part I: Introduction

The strengthening of the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR) and the launch of the European External Action Service (EEAS) are intended to help the European Union achieve a common effective presence in world affairs. Yet these institutional innovations co-exist with a stubborn obstacle to foreign policy making at the EU level: the fact that member states often have divergent policy preferences and each retains a veto over EU foreign policy initiatives. So even though the EU now has more robust mechanisms for diplomacy, and the revised Treaty on European Union re-commits member states to pursue common policies, the challenge of reaching agreement is unlikely to disappear.

In addition, the new High Representative’s first two years in office have been surrounded by controversy – some spurred by those who believe that she should be more pro-active, and some by those who would prefer that member states retain control over EU foreign policy. Such frustration with Ashton’s performance is perhaps inevitable, given that she was given the super-human task of managing the creation of the EEAS from a variety of pre-existing organisations within the Council secretariat and European Commission while simultaneously representing the Union abroad and promoting agreement among its member states and institutions. But the controversy also reflects the institutional complexity of the High Representative’s dual-hatted position at the nexus of struggles for power and influence among member states and EU institutions.

Academic sceptics have long argued that the EU has reached the limits of ‘governance without government’ and cannot have a real foreign policy unless it becomes a state: “A European foreign policy could only be achieved by creating central institutions within a European Union capable of identifying, selecting, and implementing a coherent set of objectives... this could only be achieved by the establishment of a European state and hence a European government” And yet despite these challenges, we know that the EU agrees and implements hundreds of common foreign policy actions per year and that the EU frequently speaks with a single voice. So how do EU member states arrive at common policies regarding issues and actors beyond their collective external border? What is the role of the High Representative in this regard?

The point of this paper is not to offer a single answer to the question of EU foreign policy deliberation and representation, but to propose an analytical structure for research in this area. The paper presents seven distinct models drawn from three approaches to European governance. Part II of the paper presents two models inspired by an Intergovernmental approach; Part III presents two models inspired by a Normative Institutionalist approach;

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and Part IV presents three models inspired by Constructivist and Sociological Institutionalist approaches.

All seven models start from the assumption that member states (or at least some of them) have different foreign policy preferences, but the models differ considerably on the process, scope conditions, and likely time scale of movement toward agreement on common policies. Each model’s underlying assumptions is presented, as are their core hypotheses and observable implications. Except for model 1, each emphasizes ways in which EU-level aspects of the policy-making process lead member states to forego the pursuit of outcomes that they originally preferred on the issue at hand. Each of these models generates distinct expectations regarding EU policy outcomes and the potential role of the High Representative and EEAS within the internal diplomacy of determining the EU’s diplomatic objectives. The paper thus shows that the role of the High Representative (and thus one’s assessment of whoever holds that job) depends critically upon the assumptions one makes regarding the process by which EU member states arrive at common foreign policy positions.

**Part II: Intergovernmentalism**

The first two models presented are informed by an intergovernmentalist understanding of European governance that treats the EU as a forum in which member states act strategically in pursuit of their interests and policy preferences. It thus focuses on the interests, preferences and behaviours of member states and accords little importance to supranational institutions or intra-EU transnational dynamics. The theory attributes member states’ preferences to the interaction of domestic political considerations and international strategic or market pressures, and assumes that they are unaffected by EU membership. Notwithstanding these common premises, two distinct explanations of EU foreign policy deliberation are consistent with Intergovernmentalism.

**Model 1: Competitive bargaining**

The conventional wisdom on EU foreign policymaking derives from a particularly pessimistic reading of Intergovernmentalism, which assumes that divergences in the member states’ policy preferences are not compensated by common goals or values and emphasizes the fact that each member state wields a potential veto over policy proposals. This version of Intergovernmentalism thus expects member states to treat intra-EU negotiations as zero-sum games in which each seeks to maximize its own preferences.

These assumptions regarding the preferences and calculations of member states lead to the expectation that whichever member state is least receptive to change will dominate EU foreign policy by threatening to veto any proposal that is further from the status quo than

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3 These seven models do not address the High Representative’s role(s) in the implementation or pursuit of EU foreign policy.

its own ideal policy. In other words, as long as common policies require unanimous support, “the EU will be hampered... by the constant threat of having one of its numerous member states break from its ranks.” As a result, the EU will have difficulty acting decisively, if at all, in world affairs.

This approach is consistent with three possible policy outcomes: non-decision, deadlock and lowest common denominator. Where member states’ policy preferences are mutually exclusive, they may choose to keep the issue off the EU agenda – an outcome one could refer to as non-decision. Or, competitive bargaining over mutually-exclusive preferences may prevent the adoption of any common policy – an outcome known as deadlock. In contrast, where the disagreement of the member states is a matter of degree, competitive bargaining will result in agreement on whatever policy is acceptable to all member states and closest to the ideal outcome of the one least receptive to change. This lowest common denominator (LCD) policy may reflect agreement not to change an existing policy or agreement on a new policy that reflects the preferences of the most conservative member state(s).

This explanation for EU foreign policy outcomes can be represented as follows:

\[
\text{Divergent Member State preferences + Veto option} \rightarrow \text{Competitive Bargaining} \rightarrow \text{Non-decision, Deadlock or Lowest Common Denominator}
\]

The precondition for this model’s expectations is that the making of common policies requires unanimous support from member states. If this precondition were eliminated by treaty changes (a move that Intergovernmentalism would consider unlikely), then these expectations would have to be revised.

If the competitive bargaining model is correct, and EU foreign policy is dominated by the preferences and veto threats of member states - most likely the big ones - then the High Representative and the EEAS would have little influence over the timing or content of EU common foreign policies. On the other hand, the model is agnostic with regard to the HR and EEAS’ role in the representation and implementation of whatever policies member states agree, as they may find it convenient to delegate these functions to the supranational level.

\[\text{Model 2: Log-rolling}\]


The logic of Intergovernmentalism does not necessarily indicate that EU foreign policy outcomes will reflect the preferences of the most conservative veto players on the issue at hand. Reciprocity is a standard expectation in relations among states, especially in institutionalised relationships that endure over time. So certain constellations of issues and preferences could create incentives for member states to link concessions on off-setting foreign policy issues and thus achieve mutual gains that avoid the dynamics and consequence of competitive bargaining. This reciprocity could be either ‘specific’ or ‘diffuse’.

In specific reciprocity, member states reach agreement through direct trade-offs on concurrent issues. A recent study of Council voting on the Commission’s legislative proposals found that member states often achieve agreement by ‘logrolling across proposals that either belong to the same policy domain or are negotiated during the same period’. Given the large number of member states with diverse policy preferences and issue intensities, a great variety of such deals is theoretically possible. In diffuse reciprocity, some member state (or states) makes unilateral concessions on a current issue in the expectation of repayment on a future issue. A state may thus choose not to veto a particular EU common policy because it expects that doing so will garner similar flexibility from other member states on future issues that are valued more highly.

Evidence of member states making veto threats is thus not sufficient evidence to confirm the competitive bargaining hypothesis – particularly if there is evidence that the threat was followed by a willingness to reach agreement through mutual concessions. Instead, the analyst must consider the possibility that agreement was facilitated by the norm of reciprocity and the mechanism of log-rolling. This explanation for EU foreign policy outcomes can be represented as follows:

*Divergent Member State preferences + Reciprocity → Log-rolling → Agreement*

This model’s expectation depends upon the robustness of the reciprocity norm: where reciprocity is weak or absent, states are less likely to logroll on concurrent issues and highly unlikely to make current concessions in the hope of future gains. Unfortunately, due to the potential variety of log-rolling deals, it is not possible to stipulate *ex ante* where in the policy space (e.g., conservative or median, norm-guided or norm-breaking) such agreements are likely to be made.

If the log-rolling model is correct, then the HR’s role would be to identify off-setting concessions by member states that could facilitate policy agreement, and then to lobby national authorities to make these concessions. The HR’s dual identity as Commission Vice President and chair of the Foreign Affairs Council could facilitate this function by

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emphasizing her independence from the preferences of the member states she is asking to compromise. However, succeeding in this role requires detailed knowledge of various member states’ preferences (both how they rank order possible outcomes and the intensity of their views), the creativity to identify possible solutions amidst these conflicting preferences, and the diplomatic skill to coax the various governments into making the concessions needed for agreement. In turn, this requires that the HR be close enough to the member states that they agree to share sensitive information, but sufficiently independent that they trust she is acting in the interests of the Union rather than one of its member states or institutions.

**Part III: Normative Institutionalism**

In contrast to the two versions of Intergovernmentalism introduced above, the third and fourth models are inspired by a Normative Institutionalist understanding of politics and international relations.\(^1\) As a theory of EU governance, Normative Institutionalism assumes that member states value being seen as acting in accordance with the Union’s normative and policy commitments, regardless of their divergent preferences. As a result, member states deliberate over EU foreign policy within an institutionalized setting that encourages certain negotiating practices and legitimates certain substantive outcomes while discouraging and de-legitimating others.\(^2\)

If Normative Institutionalism is correct, these norms and policy commitments should have a significant effect on how member states negotiate divergent policy preferences and on the type of policies they adopt at the EU level. The likelihood that the EU will adopt a common policy on a given issue, as well as the content of that policy, thus depend upon both the distribution of preferences among the member states (which varies from issue to issue) and how EU norms affect their choices in pursuit of those preferences.

**Model 3: Cooperative bargaining**

The cooperative bargaining model of policy deliberation emphasises the behavioural implications of the EU’s procedural norms in the foreign policy field. Through a combination of rhetorical commitment and treaty-making, EU member states have developed two meta norms as a general guide to their deliberations on foreign policy: joint action as an intrinsic value, including support for the functionality and credibility of the EU as a global actor; and consistency and coherence in EU policy-making across time and issue-areas. As the EU’s 2003 security strategy declared “Greater coherence is needed not only among EU instruments but also embracing the external activities of the individual member states.”\(^3\) In addition to these meta-norms, at least three secondary norms have developed informally through member state practice over time: regular communication and consultation,


If this hypothesis were correct, we would expect intra-EU negotiations to exhibit a great deal of give-and-take in the context of an intensive search for solutions that are acceptable (if not ideal) for the greatest number of member states. We would also expect that common policies resulting from this process would embody mutual compromises by all member states, including those with the formal ability to avoid compromise by defending their preferences with a veto threat. In sum, Normative Institutionalism’s ‘cooperative bargaining’ explanation for EU policy outcomes can be represented as follows:

\[
\text{Consensus norm + Consultation reflex } \rightarrow \text{Cooperative bargaining} \rightarrow \text{Mutual compromise policy}
\]

This model’s expectations depend upon the forum in which EU policy deliberations occur and the level of secrecy that surrounds these deliberations. In particular, cooperative bargaining is more likely to emerge when the issue in question is subject to collective deliberation within EU forums, where the EU’s procedural norms are most salient, and when
deliberations occur in camera -- that is, away from the media spotlight that raises the
domestic political costs of compromise.17

If the cooperative bargaining model is correct, then the High Representative’s role would be
to ensure that member states recognise the importance of achieving consensus and to
promote consultation and information-sharing within confidential EU forums. Succeeding in
this role would require that the HR convince member states with strong preferences to
present their views within confidential EU forums before taking a public stance, and
encourage all member states to consider the implications of their choices for the long-term
functioning and credibility of EU foreign policy.

Model 4: Normative entrapment

The fourth model of EU foreign policy deliberation emphasises the EU’s substantive (as
opposed to procedural) norms and policy commitments. In treaties and Council
conclusions, member states have formally and repeatedly identified support for democracy
and the rule of law, human rights, conflict prevention, the strengthening of multilateral
institutions, free trade, the promotion of development and environmental protection as the
goals of EU foreign policy. The EU has formally adopted more than a thousand legal acts
under CFSP (not to mention all those in other areas of external relations) to address a
variety of global issues. Some of these acts are politically insignificant, but the list includes
hundreds of substantive policies that all EU member states are legally bound to support.

The normative entrapment model asserts that while the policy preferences of EU member
states may diverge on particular issues, they value being seen as acting in accordance with
the community’s normative and policy commitments. Shared perceptions regarding which
policy options are consistent or inconsistent with pre-existing EU norms and commitments
thus shape the policymaking behaviour of member states. Those member states whose
policy preferences are seen as inconsistent with the EU’s substantive norms or policy
commitments are less willing to insist on their preferences and more acquiescent to those
with norm-consistent preferences. They compromise and ‘play along’ with the norm-
consistent policy because they expect the social rewards for doing so to exceed the costs of
the compromise. As a result, once member states have made a particular set of normative
or policy commitments, they are likely to find themselves entrapped, constrained to take
further actions that do not reflect their original intentions and/or current preferences.18 If
this is correct, one would expect EU common and community policies to be consistent with
pre-existing EU norms and policy commitments.

17 Frank Schimmelfennig and Daniel Thomas, ‘Normative Institutionalism and EU Foreign Policy in Comparative
Perspective’ in Daniel C. Thomas (ed.), Making EU Foreign Policy: National Preferences, European Norms and
18 Frank Schimmelfennig, ‘The Community Trap: Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action, and the Eastern Enlargement
Of course, the perception of normative (in)consistency is subject to deliberate acts of “framing” that link issues and choices to pre-existing ideas and prior experiences.\textsuperscript{19} This framing is intensely political: successfully framing a policy as consistent with the Union’s formal norms and prior policy commitments effectively disempowers its opponents, while framing a possible policy as inconsistent with existing norms and commitments disempowers its supporters. All EU actors, including member states and supranational institutions, thus have a powerful incentive to frame EU policy choices in terms of pre-existing norms and commitments consistent with their policy preferences. Member states that fail to do so will find themselves trapped in support of EU policies that diverge from their preferences. The normative entrapment explanation of EU foreign policy deliberation can thus be represented as follows:

\textit{Substantive norms and policy commitments + Rhetorical framing} \rightarrow \textit{Entrapment} \rightarrow \textit{Norm-consistent policy}

That said, the dynamics of normative entrapment are not equally powerful in all circumstances. They are most likely to overcome policy divergence if there is an uncontroversial norm with clear behavioural implications, if policy deliberation occurs in a site where EU norms are salient, and if there is high public attention to the deliberations.\textsuperscript{20}

If the normative entrapment model is correct, then the High Representative’s role would be to frame and publicise policy choices in a manner that promotes agreements consistent with prior normative and policy commitments. To succeed in this role, the HR would use public pronouncements to highlight pre-existing EU values and policy positions relevant to whatever issue(s) the Union is facing. She would have to do so, however, in a manner that remained true to the pre-existing values and commitments while maintaining the trust of more Eurosceptic member state governments. Within confidential EU forums, such as meetings of working groups, the PSC, and Coreper, the HR would recommend common policies consistent with these pre-existing values and policy commitments, while encouraging member states to consider the implications of their choices for the long-term credibility of EU foreign policy.

\textbf{Part IV: Constructivism-Sociological Institutionalism}

Constructivism is an approach to international relations which asserts that inter-subjective processes shape medium to long-run outcomes by transforming identities. Some of Constructivism’s assertions overlap with those of Normative Institutionalism (presented above), but the former is distinguished by its rejection of the latter’s assumption that actors’ identities and preferences are fixed. While some scholars insist that Constructivism is not


\textsuperscript{20} Schimmelfennig and Thomas, ‘Normative Institutionalism and EU Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective’.
designed to generate testable hypotheses and is thus incompatible with social science, others argue that social science should not be equated with utilitarianism or rationalism.\footnote{21}

The key point here is the consideration of actors not as rational utility maximisers but instead as role players. March and Olsen offer a conceptual model in which actors work to a ‘logic of appropriateness’.\footnote{22} Within this logic state actors (or agents) consider the context and expectations of the decision-making situations in which they find themselves and base their resulting decisions accordingly. That relationship, however, does not presume any ontological primacy between agent and structure: while the actor’s identity and options for choice are shaped by the institutional structures that she inhabits, these same institutional structures evolve as a result of their constitutive actors’ identities and choices.

The three models presented below are based different assumptions regarding where this transformation occurs and how deeply it reaches. All three of these models highlight potential processes of convergence in EU foreign policy that require a far longer period of time than in the models above.

*Model 5: Brusselisation*

This model’s point of departure is the “steady enhancement of Brussels-based decision making bodies” that was evident in the 1990s and that has accelerated and deepened over the last decade.\footnote{23} The development of a Brussels-based locus of decision making and the transfer of authority to that centre induces Brussels-based political and diplomatic actors to internalise a collectively generated set of norms, practices and values. This results in a “gradual transfer in the name of consistency of foreign policy, shifting authority away from the national capitals to Brussels”.\footnote{24} It is argued that the forging of “an ever more coherent common approach... has already taken the CESDP process beyond traditional intergovernmentalism”\footnote{25} and toward a robust form of transgovernmentalism.\footnote{26}

As noted above, writers have referred to a ‘consultation reflex’ whereby policymakers anticipate the needs of partners, internalise these within national policy-framing, and thus shift national positions incrementally.\footnote{27} Others, from the very earliest days of European Political Cooperation (EPC) have noted the creation of a certain ‘esprit de corps’ among the policy insiders involved, which occasionally even placed them at odds with their home administrations.\footnote{28} Some have spoken more obliquely about the construction of an epistemic

\begin{itemize}
\item March and Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions*.
\item David Allen, *Who Speaks for Europe*, p.42.
\item Ibid. p.53
\end{itemize}
community where the specialised knowledge and expertise is defined in terms of their understanding of decision making dynamics and structures underpinning policy. The critical point here is that the assumed internalisation of expectations is occurring within a comparatively small echelon of Brussels-based insiders. While many analysts frame this process within one of a changing identification, others have argued that there is still some scope for seeing this in at least partly rationalist terms. This process might be represented as follows;

Policy institutionalisation + socialisation of Brussels-based actors → elite identity change → weakly Brussels-identified policy

In terms of policy outputs the expectation is that a weakly instantiated set of common policies emerge. These are not likely to be well grounded in national foreign policy identities and are thus easily subverted in the name of ‘national interest’. Little or nothing by way of substantive national foreign policy ‘uploading’ or ‘downloading’ would be expected. Policy outputs would also tend to lack specificity and will be open to national interpretation and nuanced execution. At the same time, policy actors in Brussels will prioritise the creation of a formal joint policy even where that substance falls short in terms of coherence or effective execution.

If the Bruselisation model is correct, then the High Representative’s role would be that of a policy manager. Her focus would centre on the effective direction of the foreign policy bureaucracy; as both chair of the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) and as titular head of the European Action Service. She would not be expected to exercise a high profile political role and would be seen externally as one of the Council’s chief emissaries and as an interlocutor with the Union’s institutions and member states. Her role within the FAC itself would, on balance, be more passive; seeking to marshal agreement from colleagues rather than offering political direction. Within the EEAS her role would centre upon effective resourcing, structuring and administration of the service, so as to maximise its place within the foreign policy machinery. It is also likely that the HR would be sensitive to national prerogatives and sensitivities and work to mitigate any evident tensions.

Model 6: Europeanization

The starting point here is to conceive of EU foreign and security policy not as a forum within which state interests are bargained but as an environment from which policy evolves and within which the identity and resulting interests of states change. National foreign policies are thus transformed as a complex system of collective policy making leads to the widespread internalisation of inter-subjectively constructed norms and results in the redefinition

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The first dimension of Europeanisation is that of adaptation. This is traditionally represented as being a top-down process in which member states react and adjust to European engagement. As a result, the EU becomes “…part of the organizational logic of national politics and national policy-making”.\footnote{34 Robert Ladrech, ‘Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions: The Case of France’, \textit{Journal of Common Market Studies}, vol. 32, no. 1, 1994, pp. 69-88, p.69.} In terms of values and norms, therefore, we are looking for evidence either of shifting definitions of core national values and norms or evidence of visible national contestation over such norms where some image of ‘Europe’ is playing a role.

The second dimension is that of projection where national values and norms are exported to the European level in a bottom-up process. Here we are looking for evidence of efforts on the part of member states and national actors to construct Europe in their own image; to project well-established national foreign policy tropes onto the Union (EU as international peacekeeper, as broker/mediator or as superpower), and thereby to (re)configure European policy in ways that are reflective of well established national values.

The final dimension of Europeanization is that of interaction and mutual learning. This is presented as the process by which member states compose collectively agreed norms and values either on behalf of the Union as a whole or as subsets within, potentially based on shared historical experience, geography, culture or power perception. Within this model, the internalisation of norms should be visible across the national foreign policy community;
stretching from policy makers to analysts and commentators. This model is perhaps best represented as:

\[\text{Policy institutionalisation + socialisation of national foreign policy actors} \rightarrow \text{shift in national foreign policy identity} \rightarrow \text{moderately European-denominated policy}\]

Within this scenario, there is greater substantive engagement of national foreign policy identities within the construction of the collective European policy. There is also visible movement in traditional national foreign policy positions – even domaines réservés – or at least explicit contestation of them. The focus of national policy makers is likely to prioritise the effective execution of a common policy and its credibility. National foreign policy makers may also begin to present a coherent and effective EU policy as being a national foreign policy objective in its own right.

If the Europeanisation model is correct, then the High Representative becomes something of a political protagonist in her own right. She would be expected, proactively, to seek out opportunities to define, direct and execute Union foreign policy goals. One might, as a consequence, expect to see some tensions within the FAC as the HR strived first to create and then to build upon Council consensus. The HR would also tend to offer critical reflection on the success/failure of the Union in its efforts to craft common policy, perhaps even going so far as publicly to apply pressure on national governments. At a minimum one would expect to see her active engagement with national foreign policy elites on specific issues but, more critically, to press the general case for the Union as a credible and effective foreign policy actor. This might also entail her advocacy of procedural and/or institutional change to that end.

**Model 7: Collective Identity Formation**

This final model looks at EU foreign policy as both the external representation of the Union but also as “one of the boundary-producing practices central to the production and reproduction of the identity (of the state) in whose name it operates”.

The core research agenda assumes that there exists a mutually constitutive relationship between identity and foreign policy and that EU foreign policy is a discursive practice from which the Union’s collective social identity emerges.

The process by which this occurs is one that is assumed to create and instantiate collective identity boundaries. A core challenge for the Union is that its borders are not fixed. First, EU foreign policy has to accommodate the possibility of the ‘other’ becoming part of the ‘us’ through enlargement. Second, the borders of the Union’s policy spaces are not mutually reinforcing, with the borders of the Union’s monetary union (the euro) being different from that of its customs union and from the borders of the Schengen zone. Finally, the Union’s export of its policies to non-member states, through the European Economic Area (EEA) and

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the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) creates a ‘fuzziness’ over definitive delineations of who is in or who is out.  

What is argued to be under creation is not a ‘supranational’ European identity narrative deriving from a newly-minted European people or ‘demos’, but a European political space from which national complementarities can be identified and then drawn together to ground a larger, visible, pan-European narrative. Risse and Grabowsky identify a variety of elements – centred upon notions of ‘civilian power’ – that are contributing to the construction of such a European identity. This model might usefully be represented by the following:

\[
\text{Policy institutionalisation + policy democratisation} \rightarrow \text{transformation of national identities/instantiation of European identity} \rightarrow \text{strongly EU-defined policy}
\]

Within this model we would expect to see the development of pan-European policy debates on key issues and the development/engagement of European interest groups reflected initially within national public spaces and ultimately wider European public spaces. National policy makers’ rhetorical devices would increasingly define collective interests at the European level while wrapping the ‘national’ within a stronger European context. For their part, EU-level policy makers would be increasingly domesticated and be seen as legitimate actors within national public spaces.

If the collective identity formation model is correct, then the High Representative’s role would be decisively outward facing, taking the mandate of the FAC and presenting this compellingly to the world. She would seek to provide political direction and leadership within the FAC, coordinating strongly between her portfolio roles in the Commission and the Council. One might even expect the HR to seek to establish herself as \textit{primus inter pares} vis-à-vis her national ministerial colleagues within the FAC. At a minimum, The HR would be visible as the Union’s core diplomatic actor with evident support from the member states and other Union institutions. To that end, the HR would be expected to use the EEAS as a vehicle through which she would present the Union and its member states to the world, creating within the EEAS a powerful sense of mission and of independent collective agency.

\section*{Conclusions}

As this paper has made clear, there are at least seven distinct ways to understand how and when the European Union overcomes its internal divergences and agrees on common diplomatic objectives or foreign policies. These models are summarised in Table 1 and their implications for the HR and EEAS set out in Table 2. Although the seven models differ considerably on the pre-conditions and process of EU foreign policy agreement, and the

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time-scale over which they operate, none of them suggest that divergences among member
states are easily overcome. The EU-pessimist might therefore conclude that the paper
provides Catherine Ashton with seven new reasons to despair. On the other hand, the EU-
optimist might retort, there are at least seven paths to agreement, and only one need
succeed on any given issue.

It should also be borne in mind that each of these models is an ‘ideal type’, an abstraction
from reality which is designed to allow us to identify and to interrogate the logics and
variables at work. As academic readers will recognise, some of the differences between the
models result from the differences between their underlying (and sometimes incompatible)
ontological assumptions. For the policy-minded, the presentation of a multi-model schema
such as this can be frustrating as it might well be argued that elements of each model are
evident in both the history and the contemporary practice of CFSP and CSDP. However, we
would argue that even here, the study of these ideal types may prove useful. Further
detailed research using this schema may identify predominant models as well as answering
questions as to the conditions and circumstances under which different models might be
evident at different times and when/how such models might intersect or overlap – all of
which have obvious and critical implications for policy-making.

The Lisbon treaty has not made any of this easier. Given that the HR must operate across
two different decision making systems (supranational and intergovernmental), with distinct
sets of colleagues (College of Commissioners and Foreign Affairs Council), and with her
political accountability split between three institutions (Commission, Parliament and
Council), it is perhaps remarkable that she has achieved any shred of institutional or policy
coherence. At the same time, many expectations of her office – some arguably unreasonable or even incompatible -- have not been met and some member states are
getting restless. This highlights the key paradox at the heart of EU diplomacy and foreign
policy: despite the many institutional innovations since the creation of European Political
Cooperation, there is good reason to suspect that some (or many) member states lack the
political will to develop a truly common foreign and security policy for the Union.

The models outlined above are an attempt to drill down into this complex and contested
field in search of greater clarity on the motivational forces behind EU foreign policymaking,
the parameters that define ‘success,’ and the longer-term impact of this intensified system
of intergovernmental decision making. Regardless of which model one finds more accurate,
this exercise helps us put critiques of the HR’s personality and working ‘style’ in their proper
perspective.