



Helsinki, 28.09.2006

*Joint statement of the European Movement International (EMI), the Union of European Federalists (UEF) and the Young European Federalists (JEF):*

## **“The need for an EU Foreign Minister”**

Recent months have shown that the European Union is not adequately equipped to play a leading role in global 'peace diplomacy'. The crisis in Lebanon exposed the extent of the weakness: our institutional system of foreign policy needs more **coherence, effectiveness and visibility**. The European Council realised as much at its last meeting in June.

Furthermore, it is becoming increasingly clear that partial institutional reforms, more coordination and higher budgets are not sufficient to achieve fully the aim of strengthening the EU's foreign policy. Although welcome in themselves, the proposals made by the European Commission in June 2006<sup>1</sup> would not be sufficient to overcome the institutional vacuum left by **the absence of a single post in charge of foreign policy, namely an EU Foreign Minister**.

Therefore, we **re-iterate the importance** of having a single representation of the EU in foreign affairs. If the EU is to speak with **one voice**, it needs an institutional framework combining the tasks of the Commissioner for External Affairs and the High Representative for Foreign Policy. The post of EU Foreign Minister would bring much-needed coherence, effectiveness and visibility to EU foreign policy.

Such an agreement was reached during the European Convention and is included as a major institutional improvement in the final text of the European constitutional treaty. The European Movement believes that failure to ratify the Constitution would ultimately **threaten the ability of the EU to defend European values and interests in international politics**. In the area of “**peace diplomacy**” in particular,

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<sup>1</sup> COM(2006)278, 08.06.2006



a timely reaction and response is vital and can save lives. This is a field where the EU is underperforming and letting its partners down.

A clear commitment is needed to ratify the Constitution by 2009. This would mean that the first EU Foreign Minister could thus take office as a member of the Commission.

**We call upon the Finnish Presidency to reflect on the negative impact that the absence of an EU Foreign Minister** has had on the image and action of the EU around the world in the 'stocktaking' on coherence, effectiveness and visibility of EU's external relations due to be submitted to the December 2006 meeting of the European Council.

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