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Heidi Hautala MEP  
Ana Maria Gomes MEP  
Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck MEP

*Dear Ms. Brantner,*

Thank you for your letter dated 8 March, written on the occasion of Women's Day.

I can assure you that I attach the greatest importance to the role of women in the new EEAS. How could I not? I am glad that you have written to me on this subject at a time when I am considering how EEAS will be structured.

My intention is that the EEAS will be gender sensitive when it comes to making appointments. Indeed the report adopted by the European Council in October 2009 makes specific reference to this and article 6.9 of the Proposal for a Council Decision establishing the organisation and functioning of the EEAS includes an explicit reference to gender balance.

Furthermore I am determined that the EEAS, in preparing and implementing policies pay proper attention to the situation of women, including UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. The implementation of this resolution, the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of which we celebrate this year, is a priority for the EU.

I can confirm my strong commitment to gender equality.

*Yours sincerely*

*Catherine Ashton*  
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