

Candidates for EU's top foreign policy post

The decision on who will fill the new post of EU foreign policy chief is expected within weeks. One of the key innovations of the Lisbon treaty, the "high representative of the union for foreign affairs and security policy" is aimed at raising Europe's influence on the world stage

David Miliband, 44:

British foreign secretary has impressed French, German and Swedish policymakers by campaigning for EU to boost its international role. Name is being mentioned increasingly for post in Paris and Brussels. Job likely to go to a centre-left social democrat if a centre-right candidate, favoured by most EU governments, lands EU presidency



Olli Rehn, 47:

EU Enlargement Commissioner has won admirers for his calm diplomacy and support regarding Turkey's bid to join EU. Mentioned as potential presidential candidate in Finland's 2012 election



Ursula Plassnik, 53:

Former Austrian foreign minister is prominent pro-EU voice in country where many people are eurosceptics. Quit coalition government after Social Democrats refused to rule out referendum on EU treaty



Carl Bildt, 60:

Swedish foreign minister and centre-right former prime minister has decades of diplomatic experience. Tough stance towards Russia and support for Turkey's membership bid could play against him

Other contenders

Franco Frattini: Italian foreign minister

Jaap de Hoop Scheffer: Former NATO secretary-general

Chris Patten: Former British EU commissioner and last governor of Hong Kong

Dora Bakoyannis: Former Greek minister of foreign affairs