

Vienna Lecture on the European Union

Centre for European Integration Research (EIF)

‘Posthuman diplomacy’? Practices of European Diplomacy in the Digital Age

(Abstract overleaf)

17 October 2023, 5:00 pm

Hybrid event: Seminar Room at Apostelgasse 23,
1030 Vienna, and online via Zoom

Lecture: **Federica Bicchi**, Associate Professor of International Relations,
London School of Economics

Comments: **Patrick Müller**, Associate Professor, University of Deusto, Bilbao,
Department of International Relations
Guest Professor, Vienna School of International Studies

Moderation: **Gerda Falkner**, Head, Centre for European Integration Research
(EIF), Department of Political Science, University of Vienna

This lecture will be held in English, questions can also be asked in German.

Please register via eif@univie.ac.at
and let us know whether you wish to attend in person or virtually.

Abstract

Digital technologies are transforming diplomatic practices. The negotiation of key texts is occurring in blended environments that involve a variety of digital tools, from WhatsApp to video-conferences and cloud-based archives. 'Tech Ambassadors' are proliferating, with the EU most recently appointing one. The traditional brick-and-mortar Embassy model is being complemented by virtual practices, chatbots and, in the case of Estonia, a data embassy. To what extent are these changes to negotiation and representation ontologically transforming diplomacy, to suggest that diplomacy in Europe is going 'posthuman'? Digital technologies are affecting the time and space of European diplomatic practices. An ever-faster rhythm is making negotiations richer but not necessarily more inclusive. New digital sites of diplomacy are also challenging traditional diplomatic participation. The EU has contributed to level the playfield and keep diplomacy anchored in human decision-makers, but this approach is constantly challenged by the sirens of digital modernisation.