STATEMENT

by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton
during her visit to Japan

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission, issued the following statement today:

"I am delighted to be back in Japan, where I met today Foreign Minister Mr Fumio Kishida and Defence Minister Mr Itsunori Onodera. I also called upon the Chair of Foreign Affairs Committee in the House of Representatives, Mr Sunichi Suzuki.

We took stock of our bilateral relations and discussed our common objectives for the forthcoming EU-Japan Summit. We also discussed global and regional issues of common concern.

I was briefed on developments in Japan’s security and defence policy, and welcomed steps that would allow Japan more proactively to contribute as a global security provider, while noting the need to communicate carefully with regional partners on this. I outlined the work I am leading in the EU in strengthening the Common Security and Defence Policy, and we agreed to look for ways to work more closely together in this area.

Minister Kishida and I reviewed progress in the ongoing negotiations on the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) and the Free Trade Agreement (FTA). I underlined the importance of reaching ambitious and comprehensive agreements, while making progress on addressing Non-tariff barriers. We agreed that the forthcoming EU-Japan Summit should give further impetus to this process.

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We also agreed today that the Summit would take place on 19 November in Tokyo. We expect it to focus on three themes: how to build upon and sustain the economic revival we are now seeing on both sides, and the contribution this will make to stabilising the global economy; how to build a closer partnership on foreign and security policy; and what we do to take forward our shared global interests. 