Statement by HR Catherine Ashton,
on human rights in China

Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission, made today the following statement:

"The EU notes with concern that on 4th February 2010, one year passed since the prominent human rights lawyer Mr Gao Zhisheng disappeared from his home town in Shaanxi province. During the last year, the EU has repeatedly called on the Chinese government, at the highest level and including during its bi-annual dialogue on Human Rights, to reveal the whereabouts of Mr Gao, to give Mr Gao access to a lawyer and to allow Mr Gao to maintain contact with his family.

The EU is especially concerned at recent reports that Mr Gao has “gone missing”. In this context, the EU urges China to clarify without delay the situation of Gao Zhisheng and to open a fully independent and transparent investigation into his disappearance."