High Representative Catherine Ashton to visit Kenya, Tanzania and the Republic of Seychelles

Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy will visit Kenya, Tanzania and the Republic of Seychelles from 18 to 21 May. She will meet with the political leaders of these countries, with international representatives and representatives of civil society.

In her first visit to Africa, a key strategic partner for the EU, the High Representative will visit in particular the countries in the region affected by piracy off the east coast of the continent, notably Somalia, and explore with them options for effective and sustainable solutions. During her visit to the Seychelles, she will visit the EU's counter-piracy operation, Atalanta.

Ahead of her visit, Catherine Ashton said: "Piracy is one of the big challenges of our times both for the region and for the international community. It undermines maritime security in the Indian Ocean and stability and development in the region. We need to tackle both the root-causes and the symptoms of the problem in a comprehensive manner. We want to build a partnership with the countries in the region towards sustainable solutions based on local ownership with international support".

HR Ashton travels to Kenya on 18-19 May, where she will also meet with the UN Special Representative for Somalia and key representatives of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government. She will then visit Tanzania (19-20 May) and the Seychelles (20-21 May) where she is due to visit one of the vessels as well as surveillance aircraft participating in Operation Atalanta.
The EU is committed to a regional approach to piracy off the coast of Somalia, based on ownership of the countries concerned and EU support for their efforts to ensure the prosecution and detention of suspected pirates. The EU has concluded transfer agreements with Kenya and the Seychelles. Agreements with other countries in the region are under discussion. EUNAVFOR Somalia - Operation Atalanta was launched in December 2008 to contribute to the protection of World Food Programme vessels delivering food aid to displaced persons in Somalia, to the protection of vulnerable vessels sailing in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia and to the deterrence, prevention and repression of acts of piracy and armed robbery. The EU is also committed to stability and security in Somalia and to responding to the needs of the Somali people. In this context, the EU just launched a training mission (EUTM) in Uganda to train Somali troops.

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- www.consilium.europa.eu/eunavfor-somalie
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