High Representative Catherine Ashton visits India to bolster strategic partnership

Catherine Ashton, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Commission Vice-President, will visit India this week (June 22-25) to enhance and promote EU relations with India – a key strategic partner for the European Union and one of High Representative Catherine Ashton's top priorities during her mandate.

The main focus of Catherine Ashton's visit is the EU-India Ministerial meeting in Delhi (June 22). The two sides will discuss a wide range of bilateral and global issues including terrorism, piracy, climate, energy, trade and the financial crisis, as well as regional matters, including Afghanistan and Pakistan. The ministerial meeting will also prepare the 11th EU-India summit later this year.

Catherine Ashton said: "The EU and India share both aspirations and fundamental values, notably a commitment to multilateralism in world affairs. We should bolster our relationship not as an end in itself, but with a real sense of purpose. We need to improve our capacity to respond jointly to global challenges. We must encompass a wide range of areas of cooperation from security, climate change and the economy to migration, education and culture."

High Representative Catherine Ashton hopes to deepen cooperation with India in the area of security and defence in the post-Lisbon era, in particular in the field of crisis management and anti-piracy. With this in mind, HR/VP Ashton will be accompanied on her visit by Gilles de Kerchove, the EU Anti-Terrorism Coordinator, and General Ton Van Osch, Head of EU Military Staff.

She will hold a number of bilateral meetings with key politicians and policymakers, including Mr Shiv Shankar Menon, India's National Security Advisor. High Representative Catherine Ashton will meet civil society and visit a number of EU funded projects.

General background note on EU-India relations:
http://europa.eu/rapid

For additional information:
http://www.delind.ec.europa.eu/
http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/india

P R E S S

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:
Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu
Darren Ennis +32 498 963 293 - +32 2 296 32 93 - Darren.Ennis@ec.europa.eu
COMM-SPP-HRVP-ASHTON@ec.europa.eu
www.ecas.europa.eu