European Union and New Zealand to pursue Framework Agreement

EU High Representative / Vice-President of the European Commission Catherine Ashton and New Zealand Foreign Minister Murray McCully today held bilateral talks in Perth. Catherine Ashton agreed to seek a negotiating mandate for a Treaty level Framework Agreement to upgrade the bilateral relationship.

High Representative Ashton said: “Over the years, New Zealand has become a highly valued and like-minded partner to us. We are working closely together in the Pacific and in Afghanistan, on development and security. A new Framework Agreement would help build up our cooperation on political, global and sectoral issues, bringing us even closer together. I trust that we will be able to start negotiations in the near future.”

Minister McCully said: “The European Union is a partner of first order importance for New Zealand. A politically-focused Framework Agreement would strengthen our cooperation in areas such as human rights and counter-terrorism, environmental issues and development cooperation, education, science and innovation.”

Minister McCully and High Representative Ashton also discussed events in the Middle East and North Africa and security issues in the Asia-Pacific. Minister McCully recalled his appreciation of the presence of European Commission President Barroso at the Pacific Islands Forum, and of the high level of cooperation with the EU in the Pacific, including on development delivery.

Minister McCully and High Representative Ashton agreed to continue to maximise opportunities to exchange views at a high level in the future.