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

"The meeting between HR/VP Ashton and the Zimbabwe ministerial re-engagement team today was a constructive step in the process in which the EU is committed to re-engagement. It was an opportunity to deepen the dialogue with Zimbabwe, enhance our common understanding and help build trust and confidence on both sides.

The Zimbabwe re-engagement team pressed the case for a full removal of sanctions to increase the level playing field and enhance the prospects for full implementation of the Global Political Agreement. The EU recognised progress to date and encouraged the reform process to continue in the same positive direction, allowing progress towards normalisation of relations. It was agreed Zimbabwe would follow up the meeting with a letter setting out their case, which the EU side would consider before the end of July. Both sides agreed to stay in close touch in the coming months.

The EU will remain actively engaged in supporting the people of Zimbabwe. Since 2009, the EU and its Member States have provided around one billion USD in development assistance supporting social sectors, economic recovery and political reforms. We have just launched a process with the Government of Zimbabwe to develop a Country Strategy Paper for the 11th EDF, preparing to contribute to longer-term development initiatives."

____________________

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:
Michael Mann +32 498 999 780 - +32 2 299 97 80 - Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu
Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu
Sebastien Brabant +32 460 75 09 98 - Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu
COMM-SPP-HRVP-ASHTON@ec.europa.eu
www.eeas.europa.eu