Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton
following the third High Level Strategic Dialogue with China

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

"I am delighted to be here for the third round of the European Union - China Strategic Dialogue. This is the first round that has taken place in Beijing. For the first round we went to Guizhou, the home province of State Councillor Dai Bingguo. I was very privileged to visit that part of China.

And for the second round I took State Councillor Dai Bingguo back to Budapest, a city - and a country - he knew well from his time as the Chinese Ambassador there.

I want to say to all of you how much I wish to pay tribute to State Councillor Dai Bingguo, how much I value our personal relationship and his experience and wisdom. This has helped us to have serious discussions and to consolidate the Strategic Dialogue as a vital part of the EU-China relationship.

This Dialogue has helped us to increase our understanding even further. It has enabled us to address issues of regional and international significance to both of us.

In particular I want to say how much I welcome the support from State Councillor Dai Bingguo and China in recognising that the outcome of the recent European Council was a further demonstration of the EU's firm determination that we will deal with the issues surrounding the sovereign debt of several Member States.
The success of the EU-China Summit in February shows how many issues we are able to cooperate on.

We are confident that the next Summit this autumn will bring progress on trade and investment as well as how we deal with issues such as rural development, food and water security and disaster risk management.

Today we talked about our strong trade and investment links and our aspiration to see them develop. Later today we will continue to talk about some of the international issues that concern us.

Here I want to pay tribute personally to the work that China does with us and with the E3+3, as we collaborate to ensure that we build confidence in the wholly peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme.

Over the course of our discussions we had, too, a good exchange on our respective views on human rights issues. We covered individual rights, the protection of vulnerable groups, the importance of the rule of law.

And today we have been examining what more we can do in support of our work on urbanisation. We will continue to look at ways of collaborating, for example as we do now off the coast of Somalia to combat piracy.

As I read out this long list of issues I hope it will demonstrate how deep and broad the work that we do is. But the common theme of our discussions has been that there is even more to do.

And as I know that there are changes coming in China in terms of leadership, I want to end as I began - by saying what a personal pleasure it has been to work with State Councillor Dai Bingguo and to wish him very well for the future."

The statement will be available on EBS

For more information:
Joint press release after the 3rd EU-China High-level Strategic Dialogue