Statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton
at the end of her visit to Kyrgyzstan

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 just concluded my first visit to Kyrgyzstan, where I had the pleasure to meet with President Atambaev and Foreign Minister Abyldaev as well as former President Otunbayeva and representatives of civil society.

I had a frank and constructive discussion with President Atambaev on a wide spectrum of the issues of mutual interest. I stressed that Kyrgyzstan is an important partner for the EU in Central Asia. The EU has been supporting every stage of transition of Kyrgyzstan through democratic elections over the past years.

The EU is firmly committed to further support the success of democratic and socio-economic reforms as well as actions to promote inter-ethnic reconciliation. We highly value determination of the people and leadership of Kyrgyzstan to pursue democratic reform and the progress achieved.

Economic issues were also an important part of our exchange and I took good note of the Government’s priorities. I am pleased that we identified ways to further develop practical cooperation.

With the President I also discussed the importance of the rule of law, human rights and judiciary reform for prosperity and sustainable development.
Civil society representatives, when I met them, expressed concerns in particular about the cases of torture and ethnic discrimination as well as the slow pace of judicial reform. I stressed in all my meetings that civil society plays a vital role in this respect. The EU stands ready to share experience and assist in these areas.”