Catherine Ashton travels to China and Mongolia

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President of European Commission Catherine Ashton is travelling today on an official visit to China and Mongolia.

In China from 25-28 April, the High Representative will lead the EU's first high-level meetings with the new Chinese leadership. The visit comes at an important moment in the development of EU-China relations: China has recently completed its leadership change and both sides are intent on taking the EU-China relationship forward. The High Representative's first visit to Mongolia (April 28-30) is intended to lay the long-term foundations of the EU's relations with the country.

Catherine Ashton said: "China has just completed its leadership change and this is a moment to renew ties, take stock of events in the world and assess how we can best move forward and work together. The world needs more stability and our leadership – in areas of mutual interest where we can make a difference through joint efforts – can be a significant positive force in this respect.”

Catherine Ashton's visit to China comes at the invitation of Foreign Minister Wang Yi. The High Representative will have meetings with Politburo Standing Committee Member and Chairman of the Chinese People's Consultative Conference Yu Zhengsheng, State Councillor Yang Jiechi, Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi and State Councillor and Defence Minister General Chang Wanquan. Her agenda will focus on international strategic challenges including those relating to Iran, Syria, North Korea and Afghanistan.

On the first EU visit at this level to Mongolia, the High Representative will meet with the Mongolian President Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj, Prime Minister Noroviiin Altankhuyag and Minister of Foreign Affairs Luvsanvandan Bold. The High Representative will attend the 7th Ministerial Meeting of the Community of Democracies from April 28 to 30 and she will also sign the European Union's Partnership and Cooperation agreement with Mongolia, paving the way for closer cooperation on economic, environmental and other issues. A Financing Agreement in Support of the Modernisation of Mongolia's Standardisation System will also be signed.

The High Representative said: "I am very pleased to come to Mongolia during its successful chairmanship of the Community of Democracies. The signing of our Partnership and Cooperation Agreement will pave the way for much closer contact between us."
More information
EU-China relations: http://eeas.europa.eu/china/
EU-Mongolia relations: http://www.eeas.europa.eu/mongolia/