



EUROPEAN UNION

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## **Remarks by High Representative Catherine Ashton following the EU-India Ministerial Meeting, Bangalore, India**

It is an enormous pleasure to be here in Bangalore today, a city I visited in a different capacity years ago, and it is a great treat to be back again. I know that this is a city of enormous significance to you, Minister Krishna - not only as your home city, but also as a city developing and growing, especially in IT, science and technology, an important area of the collaboration and cooperation between us. So thank you so much for the invitation to be here with you today.

As you said, your Excellency, we share common values and we express those shared values in our cooperation. It is important that within a month, you will also host the EU-India summit in New Delhi, where our leaders will come together and take the opportunity to enhance that cooperation, to consider how best we can work together not just in our bilateral relations, but also to see how we collaborate in tackling some of the issues that we face together. So this summit will be an opportunity to further our energy cooperation, to consider how best we can work together to develop our trade and also to see how to face other global challenges.

I think the Free Trade Agreement with India is of enormous importance to the European Union, but also to India. Between us we have 1.7 billion people and a huge range of industry, commerce, technology companies who will benefit greatly from our collaboration. But as you would be aware, making the details work and ensuring that we have got an agreement that covers the whole spectrum takes some time. I am very pleased with the progress that we have made, I think we have had some significant progress in the last few months, particularly on goods; there is more to do to complete that - to make sure that we have an agreement that will be sustainable, that will include the necessary technical details as well as the political agreement. I think this is in the economic interest of both. It is important for the EU as we move to develop our growth strategies which will take us out of these times of economic turbulence. It is also important for India. A projected growth of 7.5% is extremely good, but I know that the minister and the government are ambitious for even greater growth and the collaboration between us through trade and investment is one way of ensuring that the growth is even higher in the future.

## **P R E S S**

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Your Excellency, you and I have also discussed the issues of security, from cyber-security through to our work to tackle piracy off the coast of Somalia. Fighting this problem is an area where we've already collaborated well together, but we nevertheless must do more - to ensure that we not only tackle the issues at sea, but also on land, and by doing that to create the circumstances where piracy will disappear completely. Your Excellency, I'm very well aware of the number of Indian citizens who are held hostage and we need to do the most we can to ensure that they are released, and collaborate in every way possible to ensure that no more hostages are taken, that no more piracy attacks are successful. I believe that will be a significant part of the work that we can do in the future.

We also briefly looked at the EU Emissions Trading System. We are very clear that this is an important part of what we are trying to do to tackle climate change, one of the greatest issues that we face. We are confident that the Indian fleet of aircraft will find itself able to deal with this successfully - it is a very modern fleet. And in the way we design this, we also point to the opportunity for the other side to come forward with equivalent measures. I know this issue will be discussed further also during the summit and I have no doubt we will address it appropriately.

And we touched upon various foreign policy issues, among them Iran. Can I just say, as the person responsible for the talks with Iran, that it is always my ambition that we will be able to engage with Iran on talks on the nuclear programme. That we are pursuing a twin track approach. On one hand there is pressure designed to enable the talks to take place. Currently there are discussions going on between Member States to try and finalise a new set of restrictive measures. As members of the international community we have the responsibility to uphold the values that we have, but also the agreements that we signed and it is in that spirit that we put the pressure on to enable the dialogue to continue. But on the other hand I have sent many messages to my counterparts in Iran to say that all of the proposals that I have put on the negotiating table a year ago in Istanbul remain on the table: the confidence-building measures that we have proposed and the invitation for Iran to put forward its own confidence building measures for us to consider. That invitation remains there and I really do hope that they will respond to that so that we can get back into talks as quickly as possible and resolve the issues.

Your Excellency, today we also talked about other issues of concern across the world and as you rightly said the opportunities to be able to collaborate and cooperate together and to think about all those questions - from climate change, to economic growth and development, and our support in multilateral organizations. I believe that in the coming months and after the summit especially we can take forward some of this work, to ensure that we do have this strong cooperation. It's not only about the important bilateral relationships that India has with Member States of the European Union; these are significant for our member States and for India. It is also about the strategic partnership that comes from rooming the 27 and shortly to be 28 Member States of the European Union in a collaboration together which will enhance the relationships for India. So your Excellency, as I began - thank you so much for the opportunity to be with you today. And I look forward to continuing our collaboration in the future.

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