



Seoul, 23 May 2014
140523/02

R E M A R K S

by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton during her visit to the Republic of Korea

"Can I begin by saying how pleased I am to be back in the Republic of Korea. I want to express my gratitude to you, Minister Yun, for your warm welcome here in Seoul. We talk to each other regularly. As you've said, we met only a few weeks ago in New York during your chairmanship of the United Nations Security Council, and it is a great opportunity to discuss more in detail a broad range of issues.

The success of our Strategic Partnership in recent years gives me particular pleasure because I have been, as you've said, actively engaged in setting up the three main EU-Korea treaties that tie us together.

The Free Trade Agreement, which I negotiated in 2009 as Trade Commissioner, is delivering good results in spite of the difficult economic times we've lived through in the last few years. Our political cooperation, embodied by the general political Agreement which I signed 4 years ago, has expanded significantly, notably on global and regional issues.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

Michael Mann +32 498 999 780 - +32 2 584 9780- Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu @EUHighRepSpox
Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu @AshtonSpox Maja

Sebastien Brabant +32 460 75 09 98 - Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu

Eamonn Prendergast +32 460 75 32 93 – Eamonn.Prendergast@ec.europa.eu

Follow us on Twitter @eu_eas

www.facebook.com/EuropeanExternalActionService

www.eeas.europa.eu

And with the new agreement¹ we've just signed on cooperation in crisis management, the Republic of Korea will be the first country in the world with which the European Union will have concluded these three key agreements. This is testimony to the remarkable way in which our relationship is growing.

But as you've indicated, Minister, our political and security relationship is not only about comparing notes. It is also about taking action. We have just signed a new agreement which will serve as a basis for future cooperation in crisis management. Over the last few years, the European Union has steadily developed as an active security provider, deeply engaged in a range of crisis missions. But to be more effective in addressing the many challenges we face, we need to work with partners, we need to join forces.

As you've indicated, Minister, we've exchanged views on some of the most pressing international issues of the day. I particularly wanted to use the opportunity of my visit to discuss security and non-proliferation.

We had a busy agenda with many bilateral, regional and international issues to discuss. I have heard especially from you, Minister, your assessment of the issues of DPRK and the recent developments in North East Asia. I want to reiterate that we share with you the same objective of a denuclearised North Korea and a stable and peaceful Korean Peninsula.

We celebrate today our strategic and truly unique partnership. I view this is a model for European Union foreign relations. I am proud and honoured to have been so closely involved in elevating relations with you Minister, with Korea in the last five years. And I am certain our partnership will continue to grow from strength to strength.

Thank you again, Minister Yun, for your hospitality today."

¹ Today, during her official visit to the Republic of Korea, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton signed with Korea Foreign Minister Yun a Framework Agreement for the participation of Korea in EU Crisis Management operations. This new agreement represents a significant step in EU-Korea security cooperation, further reinforcing excellent bilateral political relations. By setting down a legal framework governing any future participation by Korea in EU-led missions, it will enable smooth involvement of Korea in EU crisis management efforts in different theatres, facilitating future cooperation and contributing to enhanced effectiveness and flexibility in responding to crises. The Agreement is a permanent instrument, which can be activated whenever the Republic of Korea, upon the European Union's invitation, decides to join an EU crisis management operation. Korea is the first partner in Asia to sign such an agreement with the EU.