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R E M A R K S

**by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the occasion
of the initialling of the EU-Canada Strategic Partnership Agreement
(Ottawa, 8 September)**

"Merci beaucoup. C'est un honneur d'être ici aujourd'hui à Ottawa. I think we can say, absolutely and faithfully, that the European Union and Canada are natural partners. I think we have common interests. We have common values, and we look to the issues that we face in the world, from not always exactly the same perspective, but with a common determination to resolve issues.

You know, Canada was the first industrialised country to sign an agreement with the European Economic Community. So for us, what started in the 1950s as an economic relationship has grown into a strategic partnership in which we cooperate on everything from regional stability and security to the environment and higher education.

So the completion of the negotiations on this Strategic Partnership Agreement – and I want to pay tribute to Christian Leffler on my side and his team and to your team – for the tremendous work that they've done over this time period. But this signals the opening of a new chapter in our relationship, and it gives us a framework to further boost and deepen our foreign policy cooperation which, I would argue, has never been more important than now.

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It allows us to further enrich the political dimension of our relationship to contribute to the deepening of our ties – particularly I think of crisis management and security issues – but also in areas like education and transport, energy, the Arctic, science and technology.

The parallel finalisation of our Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement should complete the upgrade of the relationship as a whole."
