



Manila, 29 July 2014  
140729/01

## R E M A R K S

**by HRVP following her meeting with Albert Del Rosario, Philippines  
Secretary for Foreign Affairs**

*"Thank you very much, Secretary Del Rosario.*

*It's a great pleasure and honour to be here with you in Manila. You and I have met in different parts of the world, not least last week in Brussels. But it's a special privilege to see you again here, at home. I want to thank you for the collaboration that we have had, and say that the 20th EU-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting last week was extremely successful, a very important occasion as we develop closer links.*

*As you said, the European Union is the biggest investor in the Philippines, and we are very proud of this. We have 7.5 billion euros, which represents 30 percent of all foreign investment and which generates more than 400,000 jobs.*

*The EU is the Philippines' third trading partner. Trade exchanges reached 11 billion euros last year. And the good news on all those figures is that they are growing year after year and we intend to ensure that this growth continues.*

*We also have a strong relationship when it comes to cooperation in development. And we have more than doubled our bilateral assistance, up to 325 million euros for the next six years. We want to focus especially on supporting the Philippines in strengthening the rule of law through judicial and legal reform, inclusive growth through access to sustainable energy and of course job creation.*

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*One of the reasons I wanted to come to Manila this time was to strengthen our political dialogue and as you've indicated, Secretary Del Rosario, in our discussions today, I very much welcome the Peace Process in Mindanao and I want to congratulate all sides for the comprehensive agreement reached last week. It is truly an important achievement.*

*But we want to go further in this relationship, and turn it into a more strategically rounded partnership beyond "trade and aid".*

*As you have indicated, the work that we do together on natural disasters not only affects this part of the world but affects us all. Because it enables us to think about how to work together to enhance cooperation with the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Centre on disaster management and emergency response.*

*Another example of new areas of cooperation is the EU support to the Centre of Excellence for Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear risk mitigation opened in Manila last year and now fully operational. This Centre of Excellence now runs activities on bio safety, nuclear safety and emergency planning.*

*Again, this is an important new way in which we collaborate.*

*Finally, as you said, we have also discussed the situation in the region, including maritime issues. Let me stress that the European Union encourages all parties to seek peaceful solutions, through dialogue and cooperation, in accordance with international law - in particular with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.*

*The European Union is proud to be a part of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, and we recall its fundamental principles, namely to settle differences by peaceful means, to renounce the threat or use of force and to effectively cooperate among partners.*

*Minister, as I began, may I thank you so much for your hospitality here today and I thank you so much for the opportunity to be with you here. Thank you."*

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