

**JOINT PRESS STATEMENT
ON THE 9TH PH-EU SENIOR OFFICIALS' MEETING**

04 July 2017, Manila

1. The 9th Philippines-European Union Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) took place on 04 July 2017 in Manila. Undersecretary Enrique A. Manalo of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Managing Director for Asia and the Pacific Gunnar Wiegand of the European External Action Service co-chaired the meeting attended by officials from both sides.
2. The meeting, conducted in an open and constructive manner, acknowledged the developments in PH-EU bilateral relations since the last SOM in June 2013 and reaffirmed their continued commitment to further strengthen bilateral cooperation on a broad range of issues.
3. Both sides exchanged views on political and economic developments in the Philippines and the EU. The Philippines informed the EU of the Government's commitment to ensure inclusive economic growth and development, its holistic approach to the anti-illegal drugs campaign, and updates on the current situation in Marawi.
4. The EU informed the Philippines of the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) decision allocating 850,000 euros (Php 49 million) in emergency assistance to support civilian population affected by the events in Marawi through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).
5. Both sides looked forward to the ratification and entry into force of the PH-EU Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) which was signed in July 2012, noting that the agreement will serve as the framework for further enhancing bilateral relations.
6. The meeting highlighted the high-level visits that have taken place since the last SOM, particularly the visit of then President Benigno S. Aquino to Brussels on 15-16 September 2014 and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission Catherine Ashton to Manila on 28-29 July 2014. The Philippines looks forward to the visit of High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini to Manila for the ASEAN PMC/ARF next month. Both sides agreed to encourage an active exchange of high-level visits, including that of parliamentary delegations.
7. Both sides underscored the progress made on the implementation of the peace agreements between the PH Government and the Moro National Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), and the ongoing negotiations with the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP)/National People's Army (NPA)/National Democratic Front (NDF). The EU acknowledged the work done by the PH Government, welcomed recent positive developments, and conveyed their continued support in achieving just and lasting peace in Mindanao.

8. Both sides had a candid exchange of views on the human rights situation in the Philippines and the EU and raised their respective concerns. They noted the importance of constructive engagement and meaningful cooperation on issues of mutual interest.
9. The meeting recognized that trade and investments between the EU and the Philippines have been flourishing and continue to have strong potential to expand in the future. Since the last SOM, both sides have launched negotiations for a Philippines-EU Free Trade Agreement in 2015 and have convened two rounds of negotiations to date. The EU has also granted to the Philippines beneficiary country status under the EU Generalised System of Preferences Plus (GSP+) in 2014 and acknowledged the latest submission by the Philippines for the GSP+ implementation report that the Commission will submit to the European Parliament and the Council by end 2017.
10. The meeting discussed the EU's development cooperation with the Philippines, including programmes on sustainable energy, judicial reform, trade and Mindanao peace and development.
11. The Philippines and the EU exchanged views on the important regional and multilateral issues, particularly the Philippine chairmanship of ASEAN, the West Philippine Sea / South China Sea, cooperation within ASEM, addressing terrorism and violent extremism, and the situation in the Korean Peninsula. The Philippines and EU remain committed to the global efforts to address climate change issues and the implementation of the Paris Agreement.
12. The meeting noted that the ASEAN and EU are celebrating the 40th anniversary of the establishment of relations in 2017, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of ASEAN and the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome. The Philippines and the EU also look forward to the forthcoming ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting in Manila in August 2017.
13. The Philippines and the EU remain committed to peace and stability and the peaceful settlement of disputes in the West Philippine Sea / South China Sea. The EU also referred to the relevant principles laid out in the Bangkok Declaration of 13-14 October 2016 on Promoting ASEAN-EU Global Partnership for Shared Strategic Goals adopted at the 21st ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting. Both sides welcomed the agreement between ASEAN and China on the framework agreement for a Code of Conduct on the South China Sea to be endorsed by their respective Ministers which is considered as a promising step towards negotiating an effective Code of Conduct. As a sign of their commitment to maritime security, both sides look forward to co-chairing the 4th ASEAN-EU High-Level Dialogue on Maritime Security on 05-06 October 2017 in Manila.
14. The Philippines and the EU conveyed their sympathies for the innocent lives lost and the injuries caused by the recent terrorist attacks in Europe and in the Philippines. The meeting reiterated its strong and unequivocal

condemnation of terrorism and all its forms and emphasized the need for strengthened Philippines-EU cooperation in this area.