



EUROPEAN UNION

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Remarks by High Representative Catherine Ashton following her meeting with the President of Kazakhstan, Astana, 30 November

"I am pleased to be here in Kazakhstan today which is the final part of my visit to Central Asia this week. I had a very interesting dinner with Foreign Minister Idrissov last night and I just had the privilege of meeting with President Nazarbayev again today.

The European Union is keen to deepen and strengthen the relationship with Kazakhstan through the new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement which will be the first of enhanced agreements in this region.

In the discussions I had here we, not surprisingly, focused on economic and trade issues. The EU supports Kazakhstan as it moves forward in the negotiations to become a member of World Trade Organisation. We recognise the need for strong economic ties between businesses in Kazakhstan and businesses in the European Union.

We also talked about the relations with the region. I fully support the Presidents's call for regional integration. We discussed the importance of the EU-Central Asia Strategy and our work together.

The European Union recognises the importance of this region and we want to continue to work together. I stressed the importance of the security dialogue which we plan to have with the countries of this region, looking at issues of common concern.

I also want to say that it is important that the country moves forward with economic liberalisation and in support of civil society and human rights. We will continue to work closely together with Kazakhstan as we move forward into the future.

Thank you."

P R E S S

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