



EUROPEAN UNION

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## Statement on Salafranca Report – EUSR on human rights

Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, issued the following statement yesterday:

*"I am pleased to speak on the topic of human rights again before this House. As the Honourable Members know, this is one of my top priorities. I value this opportunity to continue our discussions. The Recommendation before the House today is a welcome contribution to preparations for the appointment of a Special Representative on Human Rights. The European Parliament deserves credit for championing this idea since its report in 2010. We have now reached the point where it commands a broad consensus across the political spectrum. Congratulations to Mr Salafranca for delivering such an overwhelming vote in AFET.*

*The broad consensus is the result of broad consultation. Over the past few months my services have been canvassing opinion from you, Honourable Members, from Member States, from Commission services and from NGOs.*

*This has helped to ensure that the thinking of this House is reflected in the draft mandate I presented to the Council:*

*The mandate will be longer than usual: 2 years, instead of 1.*

*This is the first time ever that the EU will have appointed a thematic EUSR. It is important that the mandate should be long enough to deliver on issues that are inherently long term.*

*The EUSR will have significant experience and expertise.*

## P R E S S

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*I am looking for somebody with an established track record and international experience in human rights, as well a strong understanding of EU policy. The Member States have put forward some excellent candidates, and I look forward to a swift appointment.*

*It is clear that the EUSR will be an important interlocutor for the Parliament too. You have my full commitment that he or she will be able to brief the EP regularly, in line with existing arrangements.*

*The EUSR will add considerable value to our existing work*

*This may take the form of leading human rights dialogues and consultations, where the EUSR should be a natural interlocutor for our partners.*

*Communications and public diplomacy will also be key. The EUSR should help us to be more visible and to promote human rights across the whole range of the EU's external policies.*

*Just to be absolutely clear though: I will be as personally involved as ever, but now with additional, high-level, expert support.*

*The EUSR is part of a bigger "package".*

*As you know, the Council is due to adopt a strategic framework and an action plan on human rights and democracy too. Preparation of these has taken account of input from MEPs, in line with my undertaking to engage this House throughout the process.*

*The latest such exchange took place today, just before this debate began, when my Deputy Secretary General, Maciej Popowski, met with the contact group in the Parliament, under the chairmanship of Mrs Lochbihler.*

*I hope that these contacts can continue and become a regular feature of our inter-institutional discussions on a more effective and comprehensive approach to human rights and democracy. I always intended this process to be inclusive and give the opportunity to all stakeholders in EU policy to contribute to defining future priorities.*