Remarks by High Representative Catherine Ashton at the signature of the EU-Philippines Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

Mr Foreign Secretary, Ambassadors, dear colleagues and guests,

I am very happy to be here to sign the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between the EU and the Philippines that will give a new impetus to an old friendship. It also underlines the European Union's commitment to invigorate our relations with Asia, and ASEAN in particular.

With the Philippines, Europe has a relationship going far back in history. We share many common beliefs, such as on human rights and on democracy. We both support the International Criminal Court and we stand united against the death penalty.

Because of the many personal linkages which have been established over a very long time we take a particular interest in developments in the Philippines.

Our relations continue to grow and diversify. For example through the EU’s participation in the International Monitoring Team in Mindanao; and through our growing cooperation, for example on building capacity to address Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear challenges.

We are looking forward to the possibility of deepening our trade relations through a Free Trade Agreement.

This Partnership and Cooperation Agreement is the first agreement between our two sides since the 1980 EU cooperation agreement with ASEAN. Since then, the world has profoundly changed, both politically and economically. We also face new challenges, on peace and security, economic development, poverty reduction and environmental concerns.

This agreement allows us to address the challenges in a coherent and methodical way - through both dialogue and real cooperation.
This combination of common beliefs and specific action is at the heart of our future partnership, and indeed, our friendship – not only with the Philippines, but with ASEAN as a whole.

So I hope we will continue to get together to enhance our mutual understanding and to learn from each other and that we can work together find the common solutions to common problems.

Remarks by HR/VP Catherine Ashton available on EBS