



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION Audiovisual Services

### Visit of Catherine Ashton to Kyrgyzstan: press conference

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On 27 November 2012, Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the EC, went in Bishkek, Kirgizstan. This video shows a press conference given by Catherine Ashton following the EU/Central Asia Ministerial meeting.

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TIME	DESCRIPTION	DURATION
10:00:00	Soundbite by Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the EC (in ENGLISH): I would like to start by thanking the Foreign Minister and Kyrgyzstan for hosting this Ministerial meeting so well. And I apologise for the delay but this is actually because we have had such a good discussion that it was extremely difficult to bring it to a close. So our keeping you waiting is a measure of some success, our apologies nonetheless. We have had an opportunity to discuss a number of important issues of shared interest. We in the European Union are very aware of the importance of Central Asia, and I would say the growing importance of Central Asia to us: We face shared security challenges; We have great potential to further develop our energy, trade and economic relations, to the benefit of the countries of Central Asia and the European Union; And we want to support the efforts of the countries of Central Asia as you take that journey of political and economic reforms and help you to deal with some of the challenges you face – for example environmental challenges – where we can share some of the experience and knowledge that we have. Today we talked about the EU Strategy for Central Asia, which we adopted in 2007, and the review of the Strategy we have undertaken in the past few months to look at how far we've come and what more we can do together. We agreed that all the areas of the Strategy remain important but that we should do more to make our cooperation more targeted and more efficient. We agreed that we would reinforce our cooperation in some of the key initiatives: we spoke a great deal about education: we	00:04:15

...they mentioned we spoke a great deal about education, we talked about the rule of law; we talked about the environment and we talked about water. And we talked about democratisation and human rights and the development of civil society. We also agreed that we should step up cooperation to strengthen our economic relations and work to develop the full potential of our trade and investment relations, including the importance of infrastructure to enable trade to take place effectively between the countries of this region. We focused as well on the increasing importance of security issues. In this region we face increasing and new challenges. We talked about developments in Afghanistan and the importance of the future of that country. We share a common aim: to promote a secure Afghanistan and a prosperous region as a whole. And in order to make sure that we can jointly tackle these challenges we agreed to strengthen our co-operation in the security area and to have a regular High Level Security Dialogue. We talked too about energy and the environment and water issues: again, areas where perhaps the European Union can offer its knowledge and experience, building on the cooperation that we've developed over past years and that can help to solve some of the challenges the region faces. In the area of energy for example, the diversification of energy supply and export routes is a key area of mutual interest. We also looked at the importance of strengthening energy efficiency, alternative energies and reliable, sustainable, low-carbon energy technologies. The promotion of long-term solutions to the water and energy needs of this region is of great importance to you and to the European Union. And we want to contribute in every way we can. And so Minister, I would say thanks to your wonderful hosting this has been a very successful meeting. I very much look forward to continuing this cooperation – and developing cooperation – in the ways we have described. Thank you.

10:04:15	Questions/answers session	00:02:52
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