

Brussels, 21 December 2001

European Commission establishes Delegation in Cambodia

In a move set to further strengthen relations between the European Union (EU) and Cambodia the European Commission has formally established a Delegation in Phnom Penh following the signature by EU Commissioner for External Relations the Rt Hon Chris Patten and Senior Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation HE Hor Namhong of the Delegation's Establishment Agreement. Commenting on the event, Commissioner for External Relations Chris Patten said, "The opening of the Delegation crowns a steady evolution of the relations between the European Union and the Kingdom of Cambodia. It symbolises the passage of a partnership which progressed from aid for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the country, to the consolidation of peace and democracy and is now based as well on the development of trade and investment links."

With the Delegation in Cambodia the European Commission will for the first time have a fully-fledged mission in Phnom Penh. Mr Klauspeter Schmallenbach will be accredited as Ambassador-Head of Delegation residing in Bangkok, with Mr Aldo Dell'Araccia as Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

The decision to open the Delegation in Cambodia forms part of the European Union's new strategy for Asia, the core objective of which is to strengthen the EU's presence in the region, raising it to a level commensurate with the growing global weight of an enlarged Union.

The Delegation will implement cooperation programmes and deal with all other issues of common interest regarding the European Commission and Cambodia. It will take over the premises of the European Commission's Technical Coordination Office, which will cease its activities at the end of the year. It

Since the signing of the Paris Peace Accords in October 1991 the amount of aid granted to Cambodia by the European Commission - the executive arm of the EU - has been in excess of 300 million euro. This aid is in addition to that granted bilaterally by individual EU Member States and covers a broad range of sectors such as humanitarian assistance, education, rural development, human resources, the environment, mine clearance, democratisation and human rights. The EU will also observe the first local elections in Cambodia on 3 February 2002 as a sign of its commitment to Cambodia's democratic development.

The Delegation of the European Commission in Cambodia

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