



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION - PRESS RELEASE

### **HR/VP Catherine Ashton travels to India on 16-17 January**

Brussels, 16 January 2012 - Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, will travel to India on 16-17 January for a bilateral visit. She will co-chair the EU-India Ministerial Meeting and meet representatives of the Indian government.

Ahead of her visit, the High Representative said: "The European Union is committed to strengthening the strategic partnership with India. My visit comes at a time when both India and the EU are facing important challenges. I hope the visit will strengthen our political and economic ties and create opportunities for synergies in addressing regional and global challenges, including for example in the field of security."

On 16 January, Catherine Ashton will co-chair the EU-India Ministerial Meeting with Foreign Minister S. M. Krishna in Bangalore. These discussions will also prepare the ground for the 12<sup>th</sup> EU-India Summit due to take place on 10 February in New Delhi.

Among the issues on the agenda will be security and trade as well as foreign policy issues. HRVP Ashton will underline the importance of developing cooperation between the EU and India in the field of security as a sign of stronger political engagement between the two partners. She will also reiterate the EU's commitment to conclude as soon as possible a comprehensive and balanced Free Trade Agreement between the EU and India.

During her trip, Catherine Ashton will also meet other representatives of the Indian government, including Minister of Defence A. K. Antony and National Security Advisor S. S. Menon.

*Europe by Satellite (EBS) will provide coverage of the visit.*

More information on the EU and relations with India:

[http://www.eeas.europa.eu/index\\_en.htm](http://www.eeas.europa.eu/index_en.htm)

**Contacts :**

[Michael Mann](#) (+32 2 299 97 80)

[Maja Kocijancic](#) (+32 2 298 65 70)

[Sebastien Brabant](#) (+32 2 298 64 33)