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**Summary of remarks of Javier Solana,
EU High Representative for CFSP
at the opening session
of the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference with the EU**

Phuket (Thailand) 22 July 2009

Javier Solana, EU High Representative of CFSP, participated today at the ASEAN Post Ministerial conference that took place in Phuket (Thailand) dedicated to the enhancement of the relations between the EU and ASEAN and with a special focus on the joint efforts to face global challenges. Javier Solana reiterated the support to the ASEAN Community building process and welcomed the decisions taken at the ASEAN ministerial meeting. This is a summary of his remarks:

"On behalf of the European Union let me express how impressed we are with the enormous progress ASEAN has achieved since my last meeting with you. You have adopted the Charter, now fully in force. With this, ASEAN now has a legal personality. We are pleased with the progress made in its implementation, giving another boost to the ASEAN Community building process.

These efforts are not happening out of the blue. They testify the remarkable determination of ASEAN to strengthen itself from within. We sincerely support ASEAN's determination to live in peace, security and prosperity. This is also one of the reasons for the EU's active presence in South East Asia. We also support the ASEAN Community building process in order to better address common challenges.

The financial and economic crisis is in full swing, consequences of climate change are more pertinent today than ever in the past. Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism,- here I would like to express my solidarity with Indonesia -, food and energy security are issues which

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

Spokesperson of the Secretary General, High Representative for CFSP

☎ +32 (0)2 281 6467 / 5150 / 5151 - ☎ +32 (0)2 281 5694

internet: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/solana>

e-mail: presse.cabinet@consilium.europa.eu

call for a united front also between the EU and ASEAN. As we did in Aceh, we should continue to use our joint strength to bring peace and stability also to the other parts of the world in need, such as Afghanistan, from where I have just returned.

Our partnership is underpinned by our commitment to shared values. The ASEAN Charter rests firmly on the principles of democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. We encourage you to use all efforts to protect human rights in this region, in particular through the ASEAN Human Rights Commission, which you have just agreed to create. This is indeed a milestone and a crucial development in ASEAN's key role as a serious international player and a provider of stability. We stand ready to offer our own long experience in this field.

The EU supports the integration processes in South East Asia as a contribution to enhancing security and stability. We hope that ASEAN will remain at the centre of the "evolving regional architecture" in East Asia. You should be certain of our support to this end, both in all the regional dialogue processes in which we participate now, as well as in the future. I am specifically referring to the East Asia Summit.

I am very pleased that, in recognition of the EU's involvement in the region through ASEAN, we made an important step forward in the direction of accession by the EU to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation. We hope to be able to finalize it as soon as possible. Let me convey my appreciation for all efforts made by Thailand as ASEAN Chair in this regard.

Recently, the EU and ASEAN met in Phnom Penh to discuss how to proceed further in enhancing our relations. We already moved from political declarations to practical cooperation. The scope of implementation of our Plan of Action is truly impressive. We need, however, to move forward and I welcome the adoption of the ambitious Phnom Penh Agenda, to be implemented in next two years.

I would like to thank my colleague, Minister Hor Namhong, for the cooperation during Cambodia's term as the Dialogue Coordinator Country. I am looking forward to enjoying the same fruitful period of relations with our colleagues from Brunei Darussalam.

The EU is now ASEAN's largest trading partner. ASEAN is the EU's leading foreign direct investment destination in Asia. But trade and investment is only one part of the picture. For example, we are both major players in the international financial system, and ASEAN is a growing destination of European tourism.

This is why we should advance the negotiations of Partnership and Cooperation Agreements as quickly as possible. I therefore welcome the recent initialling of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement by Indonesia. I am looking forward to seeing other ASEAN Members following soon, and I hope that we will be able to find effective ways to advance also the Free Trade Agreements (FTA) negotiations.

We have come a long and constructive way in the past decades but there are still enormous opportunities for improvement. ASEAN and the EU are leading by example: closer co-operation between nations is the only way forward in a globalised world. ASEAN and the EU are committed to this principle, but they are also depending on each other to succeed. We need everybody to achieve this success. Thank you. ”
