

**EUROPEAN UNION**

DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA

Press Release

Phnom Penh, 1 June 2007

European Commission and Cambodian government conclude their fourth Joint Committee

The European Commission and the Royal Government of Cambodia concluded their fourth Joint Committee in Brussels on 30 and 31 May. It was the first time that this Joint Committee included a Sub-group on 'Institution Building, Administrative Reform, Legal and Judicial Reform, Governance and Human Rights'. As in previous Joint Committees, specific Sub-groups of the Joint Committee covered respectively development cooperation, and trade and investment.

"This meeting provides us with an invaluable opportunity to take stock, in a frank and constructive way, of the progress made in our common agenda of promoting peace and prosperity, democracy and sustainable development", said James Moran, Director for Asia in the European Commission's Directorate-General for External Relations. "We are very pleased that the bilateral relationship between the Commission and Cambodia has over recent years continued to mature, to a point where we can have substantive discussions in the Joint Committee not only development cooperation and trade, but also on governance and human rights."

Dialogue in the Sub-group on 'Institution Building, Administrative Reform, Legal and Judicial Reform, Governance and Human Rights' focussed on the progress made, as well as the problems Cambodia still faces, in such issues as implementing the UN Human Rights Conventions, putting in place a sound legal framework for civil society actors and fighting corruption and human trafficking.

The Cooperation Sub-group discussed current development activities funded by the European Commission in Cambodia with a total grant commitment of just over €100 million. These actions include rural development and the development of SMEs in the agro-industry sector, education and health, public financial management reform and support for the Commune Councils, human rights and private sector development. For the period 2007-2010, the European Commission has committed an additional €77 million in bilateral aid to Cambodia, and an estimated additional € 20-25 million of Commission funds is expected to be allocated to the development cooperation work of international and local NGOs in Cambodia.

The agenda for the Sub-group on trade and investment, included bilateral trade issues and the ongoing reform of the rules of origin for the EU's 'Everything but Arms' Initiative. Recent political developments in the EU and Cambodia, and the progress of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal (Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia) were discussed in the plenary session of the Joint Committee.

In parallel to the Joint Committee, HE Mr HOR Namhong, Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, visited Brussels, where he had a bilateral meeting with the Vice-President of the European Commission Ms Margot Wallström, and called on the European Commissioner for External Trade Mr Peter Mandelson. At the European Parliament the Cambodian Foreign Minister met with Mr Marc Tarabella, Member of the European Parliament and vice-chair of the Parliament's Delegation for relations with the countries of Southeast Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Background:

The Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and the Kingdom of Cambodia, which was signed in 1997, provides the legal basis for the Joint Committee.¹ Joint Committees takes place every other year alternately in Phnom Penh and Brussels and they provide an important platform for the Commission and Cambodia to review their cooperation, and maintain their policy dialogue, in the different areas covered by the Agreement.

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The European Commission is the executive body of the European Union (EU). The European Commission has supported the rehabilitation and development of Cambodia since the signing of the Paris Peace Accords in 1991. European Commission assistance is additional to that granted bilaterally by the individual EU Member States, and covers a broad range of sectors, such as education, health, rural development, private sector development, administrative reform, and democratisation and human rights.

The EU now has 27 Member States following the accession of Bulgaria and Romania on 1 January 2007. In March this year, the EU celebrated the 50th Anniversary of its founding agreement, the Treaty of Rome.

¹ http://www.delkhm.cec.eu.int/en/eu_and_country/ec_cambodia.pdf