



EUROPEAN UNION

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## **Statement by the Spokesperson of High Representative Catherine Ashton following her meeting with Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti**

The spokesperson of Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission, issued the following statement today:

High Representative Catherine Ashton met today with Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti to discuss the situation of Italian citizens presently held in India.

The High Representative briefed the Prime Minister on the EU's latest contacts with the Indian authorities. She underlined the need to put this incident into the broader context of international cooperation on counter-piracy and more specifically on the issue of regulating the protection aboard ships, whether they be Vessel Protection Detachment or privately contracted armed security guards, through the different discussions taking place with our international partners.

The High Representative discussed these issues when she visited India last January with the intention of developing EU-India cooperation on these issues while involving also the rest of the international community.

They agreed to stay in close touch.

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**P R E S S**

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