



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**



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**Statement by the President of the European Council
Herman Van Rompuy
following his meeting with the
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia Hun Sen**

I was happy to meet today Prime Minister HUN SEN. We met already during the G20 Summit in Los Cabos last June and I was pleased to accept his invitation to visit Cambodia ahead of the ninth Asia-Europe Meeting which will be held in Laos next week.

I expressed to him and to the people of Cambodia our deep sadness and condolences for the death of King Norodom Sihanouk. We know that the whole Country is mourning a King who played a key role in Cambodia's history.

I exchanged views with the Prime Minister on a number of bilateral and regional issues. We confirmed the strong ties between the European Union and Cambodia and expressed our commitment to develop our relations further. The European Union is a long-standing partner and believes that these relations present a large potential for strengthened cooperation.

I commended Prime Minister Hun Sen for the political and socio-economic transformation achieved in Cambodia since the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime and 1991 Paris Peace Agreements. Although many have been overcome, challenges remain. We discussed how to ensure that this transformation results in inclusive and sustainable growth and guarantees political and social stability. As one of Cambodia's largest trading and donor partners, the European Union will continue to support Cambodia actively in its efforts to alleviate poverty and develop economically, and to encourage strengthening democracy and rule of law.

P R E S S

Dirk De Backer - Spokesperson of the President - ☎ +32 (0)2 281 9768 - +32 (0)497 59 99 19
Preben Aamann - Deputy Spokesperson of the President - ☎ +32 (0)2 281 2060 - +32 (0)476 85 05 43
press.president@consilium.europa.eu <http://www.european-council.europa.eu/the-president>

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We discussed the EU's concerns on the land management issue. In commending the personal engagement of the Prime Minister in this regard, including the moratorium on Economic Land Concessions and the land titling campaign, I encouraged further action with the aim of meeting those concerns.

I communicated to the Prime Minister European our strong attachment to the respect of human rights. I also encouraged the Government to ensure the widest possible participation in the parliamentary elections in July 2013 in an open and conducive environment.

Finally, we discussed the challenges facing the region. We agreed on the importance of regional cooperation and integration in Asia to strengthen political stability and economic prosperity. The EU has substantial interests in Asia not only in terms of trade and investment, but also in terms of security. In this regard, I thanked the Kingdom of Cambodia for its support for the EU's accession to the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, to which the EU attaches great importance. I also recalled that the EU is an active member of the ASEAN Regional Forum since its creation in 1994, and I expressed to the Prime Minister - who is currently Chair of the ASEAN - the EU's intention to further increase its engagement in the East Asia Regional Architecture, including through active participation in the East Asia Summit.

I thanked him and the people of Cambodia for their warm welcome and friendly hospitality and I indicated that I am very much looking forward to seeing him next week at the ASEM 9 in Laos.
