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Remarks by

**Javier SOLANA,
EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy,
at the "Southern Corridor - New Silk Road" Summit**

Prague, 8 May 2009

Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, attended the "Southern Corridor-New Silk Road" summit, held in Prague on Friday, 8 May 2009. The following is an edited summary of his remarks:

"This Southern Corridor Summit is an important initiative. The countries and institutions meeting today are brought together by a common vision and common determination. We agree the Southern Corridor is not just a good idea in principle. We also agree we need to make it happen. This Summit also comes at a crucial time. We have recently had a number of important energy conferences: in Budapest, Ashgabat and Sofia. They illustrated that energy security is not a zero-sum game. We can and should build on the progress made. But Summits and declarations in themselves are not enough. We need to sustain the momentum and take concrete actions. So that political commitments are translated into signed agreements, real investments and actual molecules flowing westwards.

The centre-piece of the Southern Corridor is deeper co-operation on energy. As everybody knows, in the coming years the EU will be importing a growing amount of its energy from abroad. For this we will need to nurture partnerships with existing suppliers: Russia, Norway, Algeria to name a few. But we also want genuine diversification, both in terms of sources and transit routes. This is a strategic issue for us. We all know that excessive dependence on one source, one export route, or one company creates vulnerabilities. And vulnerabilities are a source for instability.

This, then, is the main rationale for the Southern Corridor. It is manifestly in our interests as consumers to do so. But diversification of export routes also serves the interests of producers and transit states. It is when the interests of all parties inter-sect that new opportunities emerge. That is where we are today.

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I would like to make two more specific points, which in themselves are related:

Firstly, energy issues can be politically divisive. They can and have been linked to political pressure, regional instability, corruption and bad governance. But energy can also be a uniting factor. At heart, energy is about connecting people. From producing, transit and consumer countries. From governments, companies and wider societies. In this context, it is important to note that the Southern Corridor is an open concept. Not directed against anyone, nor excluding anyone. It is about open markets and co-operative politics. Here I come to the crux: the vital ingredient for both open markets and co-operative politics is agreed rules, implemented in a non-discriminatory way. Rules matter in international life - both in energy and broader diplomacy. Agreed rules build trust and promote stability. They make states secure, people free and companies willing to invest.

Secondly, we have to put energy into a context of both broader and deeper engagement by the European Union. Today, we are committing ourselves to deeper co-operation on energy and transport. But this is part of a wider form of EU political engagement, including in the area of security. Again we see a certain linkage here: greater stability should flow from a successful and well-regulated Southern Corridor. But it also works the other way around: success in the area of energy requires greater trust and stability. So we need to embed energy issues into this a wider context. Besides, the wider our prism we use - as opposed to just energy - the more likely we will find common ground.

Mr President, dear colleagues, today's Summit should not be a one-off event. It is really a call for action. To remove all obstacles and ensure that our common vision of the Southern Corridor will be realised. This will not happen overnight. Nor all in one go. But the vision that binds us is both inspiring and achievable. It is high time and up to us to make it happen"
