**Brussels, 14 September 2013**
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# S T A T E M E N T

## by High Representative Catherine Ashton following the US-Russian agreement on chemical weapons in Syria

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

*"I welcome the agreement reached today between the United States and the Russian Federation to ensure the swift and secure destruction of Syria's chemical weapons and programme. They are committed to finalising the details of this agreement and submitting a draft decision to the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in the next few days. This will set out detailed procedures for the expeditious destruction of materiel, the termination of the chemical weapons programme and a stringent verification process. I call on the UN Security Council to assume its responsibilities in agreeing swiftly on a resolution that will give further authority to the whole process.*

*I join the US and the Russian Federation in demanding that Syria provide the OPCW, the UN and other supporting personnel with immediate rights and unfettered access to inspect any and all sites in Syria. I welcome the statement of commitment by the Syrian authorities immediately to apply the Chemical Weapons Convention on a provisional basis prior to its entry into force.*

*The EU is already the largest financial contributor to the OPCW, and a number of EU Member States have the technical knowledge necessary to assist in securing sites, and in dismantling and destroying certain chemical agents. In close coordination with its Member States, the EU stands ready to offer further support to the OPCW in carrying out its important and urgent tasks.*

*I hope that today's agreement will pave the way for the resumption of efforts towards a political solution to the Syrian conflict. I urge all partners in the international community to support the swift*

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*holding of a peace conference on Syria and to work together toward bringing an end to the suffering of the Syrian people."*

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