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Statement by the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton welcoming the UN Security Council resolution on Syria authorising the deployment of an advance observation team

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

"I welcome the resolution just adopted by the UN Security Council, unanimously authorising the immediate deployment of an advance team of up to 30 unarmed military observers to begin reporting on the implementation of a full cessation of armed violence in Syria.

This is an additional step in the right direction in the implementation of the UN-League of Arab States Special Envoy Kofi Annan's six point plan, which I have strongly supported from the start. It is also a long-awaited development for the Syrian people after more than a year of suffering from violence and repression.

Even if the situation on the ground remains very unstable and uncertain, I hope this resolution will open the way to a fully-fledged UN observation mission in Syria in accordance with Kofi Annan's plan. The resolution presents an unequivocal call from the international community to the Syrian regime to stop violence against its population and to address urgent humanitarian needs. I call on the Syrian Government to take this opportunity to change course, and fully cooperate with the initial observation team.

The first priority is to ensure a complete cessation of violence in Syria and to allow for full and unhindered access to humanitarian aid."

P R E S S

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:
Michael Mann +32 498 999 780 - +32 2 299 97 80 - Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu
Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu
Sebastien Brabant +32 498 986 433 - Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu
COMM-SPP-HRVP-ASHTON@ec.europa.eu
www.eeas.europa.eu

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