EUROPEAN UNION

Brussels, 20 March 2012
A 134/12

Statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton following her meeting with Nabil Al Araby, Secretary General of the League of Arab States

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:

"On Monday, I met the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, Dr Nabil Al Araby. The EU's relations with the LAS are essential for our engagement in our common neighbourhood. Since I took office we have intensified our cooperation and dialogue on many matters of common interest and I am grateful for the excellent cooperation with Dr Al Araby.

Above all, we discussed the appalling situation in Syria. I reaffirmed our strong support for the LAS plan. We agreed that the most urgent priority should be to stop the killing and reiterated once more our call on the regime to stop all acts of violence. Members of the UNSC should assume their responsibilities and speak with a strong and united voice to achieve this.

I reiterated the EU's full support to the efforts of the Special Envoy of the United Nations and the Arab League, Kofi Annan. We are determined to support his efforts to bring an end to all violence and human rights violations and promote a peaceful solution to the Syrian crisis.

The Syrian regime needs to continue to engage with Kofi Annan and fully cooperate with him. We also discussed the humanitarian situation and both expressed our support for the work of the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos, and reiterated our call for unhindered humanitarian access.

We discussed the Middle East Peace Process, which remains high on the EU's agenda. On Wednesday, I will be hosting the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting. I will also meet the Quartet envoys to follow- up on last week's Principal's meeting."

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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