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Statement by EU High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on the joint agreement by the US Secretary of State J. Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister S. Lavrov to work towards convening an international conference to find a political solution to the conflict 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 would like to express my full support to the joint call made by US Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to convene as soon as possible an international peace conference on Syria as a follow up to the Geneva Conference of June 2012. I and the EU member states have consistently supported the vision of a political settlement outlined in the Geneva Communique. The conflict is so serious that it could have repercussions not only for Syria but for the entire region. Only bringing the two sides to the negotiating table can kick off the political process, notwithstanding differing views on the future of Assad and his regime.

I am ready to assist in any way possible and hope that the two sides will exercise maximum flexibility so as to start the dialogue soon. I hope that the announcement will be the beginning of a true peace process. It is imperative that the process is Syrian-led and that the interlocutors will be truly empowered to implement on the ground whatever decisions will be made."

P R E S S

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