Brussels, 4 August 2012

EUROPEAN UNION

Statement by the Spokesperson of High Representative Catherine Ashton on expulsions by the Lebanese authorities of Syrian nationals to Syria

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

"The High Representative is concerned by the recent reports of expulsion by the Lebanese authorities of Syrian nationals to Syria. As a party to the UN Convention Against Torture, Lebanon has a clear legal obligation that no person is returned or extradited to a State where they could be subjected to torture. Today Syria is in a situation where people's lives are at risk across the country, including well documented reports of torture. Lebanon must ensure that no deportation takes place outside the framework of its international obligations, and that effective and transparent procedures are in place, in consultation with all appropriate domestic and international organisations in particular with UNHCR.

The Lebanese government has given assurances with regard to the respect for its international obligations and has extended support to those fleeing the violence in Syria. The EU is assisting the Lebanese authorities in addressing the constraints and challenges this situation places on the country, in terms of rule of law, protection, safety and security, social and economic development. The EU reiterates expectations concerning the responsibility of the Lebanese authorities to continue to provide protection, in line with the principle of non-refoulement."

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

EN