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Statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton on the broadening of restrictive measures against the government of Syria

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

"Yesterday I stated on behalf of the European Union that we would take further action in response to developments in Syria. The escalation of the violent crackdown on peaceful protesters and the intensifying large-scale use of indiscriminate military force have shown the complete loss of the Syrian regime's legitimacy, and the necessity for Bashar al-Assad to step aside. In the face of these outrageous developments the EU announced an upcoming broadening of its sanctions against the Syrian regime, as had also been foreseen by the EU Foreign Ministers in July.

Today, the European Union has reached political agreement on the addition of twenty Syrian individuals or entities to the list of those targeted by an asset freeze and travel ban. I expect to see their designation finalised and published in the coming days.

Moreover, political agreement has been reached to extend the scope of the EU restrictive measures against the regime, while minimising potential negative impacts on the Syrian people. Proposals are now being prepared for an embargo on the import of Syrian crude oil into the European Union; suspending the technical assistance of the European Investment Bank; and imposing an asset freeze and travel ban on those benefiting from or supporting the regime's policies. These will be examined in the Council early next week.

The European Union continues to aim at putting an end to the brutal repression and assisting the Syrian people to achieve their legitimate aspirations."

P R E S S

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