



**EUROPEAN UNION**

Damascus, 14 December 2011

## **Local EU Statement on Syria**

*The European Union Delegation issues the following statement  
in agreement with the EU Heads of Mission in Syria.*

The European Union reiterates its grave concern over human rights violations by the Syrian regime against its own people. The EU condemns in the strongest terms the killings, torture, excessive use of violence, enforced disappearances and intimidations by the Syrian military, police and security forces and the blatant breaches of international law by Syrian authorities.

High Representative Catherine Ashton's declaration on the occasion of Human Rights Day on 10 December 2011 underlined the work of human rights defenders, and on how social media can be used to promote and underpin change. The EU pays tribute to the many human rights defenders in Syria who through use of social media are helping to advance and protect the fundamental rights of the Syrian people, at risk to their own safety. The EU condemns the Syrian regime's restrictions on freedom of expression and access to the internet, as well as the intimidation and arrest of bloggers and other human rights defenders.

The report of the independent commission of inquiry on Syria to the UN's Human Rights Council documents an appalling account of grave and systematic abuse of citizens, including children, and general disregard for basic rights, including safe access to care. The report finds that members of the Syrian military and security forces have committed crimes against humanity. The EU is deeply concerned by these findings, and welcomes the establishment of a mandate of a Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Syria, and welcomes UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Pillay's briefing on Syria to the UN Security Council.

The EU urges the Syrian authorities to immediately implement all parts of the Arab League Plan. The EU calls on the Syrian authorities to allow unhindered access for observers to oversee measures to end violence and monitor human rights, and for free access to Syria by foreign journalists.