



EUROPEAN UNION

Brussels, 27 April 2012  
A 201/12

## Statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton on the situation in Syria

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:

*“I am extremely concerned about the continued violence in Syria in violation of the ceasefire which should have come into effect on 12 April and despite the presence on the ground of UN observers. I call upon all parties in Syria to cease immediately all forms of violence.*

*It is clear that the Syrian government is not fulfilling its obligations and is failing to meet its commitments to withdraw its troops and heavy weapons from population centres. Therefore, I urge once more the Syrian authorities to fully respect the terms of the agreement with the UN and immediately and fully comply with Kofi Annan’s plan endorsed by UNSC resolutions 2042 and 2043.*

*The Syrian Government must ensure that the ceasefire holds. It must also release detainees, provide access for journalists, ensure freedom to demonstrate peacefully and allow humanitarian assistance. I am very concerned at reports suggesting that the numbers of detainees have sharply increased since the agreement of the ceasefire.*

*It is crucial that all efforts are made to expedite the deployment of the UN observation mission to Syria (UNSMIS). I reiterate the EU’s and Member States’ readiness to provide support that might be requested to guarantee the success of the observer mission.”*

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**P R E S S**

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