



EUROPEAN UNION

Brussels, 14 May 2012
A 224/12

Remarks by High Representative Catherine Ashton upon arrival to Foreign Affairs Council, Brussels, 14 May 2012

Today we have the monthly Foreign Affairs Council and then later we have the Development Ministers meeting to discuss a number of issues, of which Burma/Myanmar will be a key part of the debate. Officially we have suspended the sanctions: now it's time to think about how we can support the people of Burma/Myanmar on the journey that they're engaged with towards democracy, freedom, the end of ethnic violence and the changes in that country. Last week the Speaker of the Parliament of Burma/Myanmar was in our offices to talk with us about that future.

We begin today with the Foreign Affairs Council looking at Afghanistan. We have three big conferences coming up: Chicago next week where I will be at the NATO Summit, and then two more where the key questions will be about the future long-term support for Afghanistan. And today is an opportunity for us to consider carefully our response to the needs of the people of Afghanistan.

We will of course focus again on Syria. The continuing violence is appalling and we continue to look again at sanctions and of course to offer our support to Kofi Annan as he moves to try implement all the points of the 6 point plan. We've been supporting the mission and this weekend it took delivery of a number of armoured vehicles. Kofi Annan is a great diplomat and has worked very hard to consider how best to engage the UN Security Council as well of course to engage in Syria. I've looked at his report to the Security Council. We will continue to support him for as long as he wishes to continue with this mission. For the moment he believes this is the best way forward and I think we all have a responsibility to try and support him because the 6 point plan will make a significant difference and real progress towards the change we think needs to happen.

We will also discuss the Middle East Peace Process: we'll be discussing our continuing commitment, remaining solid to the two state solution, and sending a strong message to the new coalition in Israel and to the Palestinians that we want to see talks move forward.

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 +32 460 75 09 98 - Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu

COMM-SPP-HRVP-ASHTON@ec.europa.eu

www.eeas.europa.eu

EN

And Ukraine, where there is much to talk about in terms of our strategic discussions about the Association Agreement and consequences in terms of Euro 2012. We're very concerned about the case of Yulia Timoshenko and as you know we have been consistent in sending messages to Ukraine about the importance of justice being done and being seen to be done and the need for them to really consider what they do now. She's one of a number of people who have been treated in a similar fashion. We will continue to put that message across. President Barroso has made clear the Commission's position on Euro 2012, and as Vice-President of the Commission, I fully support him in that. Foreign Ministers now need to debate this and of course we need to talk about that with Poland and that's what we'll do today.
