



EUROPEAN UNION

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**Statement by the spokesperson of EU High Representative  
Catherine Ashton on the postponement of the Helsinki Conference  
on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass  
destruction**

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

*"The High Representative notes with regret the postponement of the Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, which the 2010 Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty had scheduled for 2012.*

*The EU supports the ongoing preparations for a successful conference with the participation of all States of the region and the efforts of Ambassador Jaakko Laajava, the appointed Facilitator, and his team, to that end. The High Representative is particularly grateful to the Facilitator for his tireless efforts to lay the groundwork for a successful conference, against the backdrop of turmoil and dramatic political change taking place in the Middle East.*

*The High Representative hopes that the Conference will be convened as soon as possible, since its goal of promoting the establishment of a WMD Free Zone in the Middle East is an objective to which the EU, along with all the members of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, subscribed in the Barcelona Declaration in 1995. The EU remains actively engaged in supporting this process, notably through its Non-Proliferation consortium and a series of seminars on the topic, such as those organised in 2008, 2011 and November 2012."*

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**P R E S S**

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