



EUROPEAN UNION

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**Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton  
after her meeting with the Foreign Minister of Estonia, Urmas Paet**

Thank you very much, it is a great delight to be back in Tallinn. As I was saying to your Minister, it's been a little while since I was here and I was delighted for the opportunity to see this beautiful, old city again.

I came at your request and it is a great honour to be invited to address your Ambassadors' conference and to have the chance to meet with you. I should say I value our work together to develop a Common Foreign and Security Policy very much and see Estonia as an important country in the development of our foreign policy.

At the Foreign Affairs Council your contributions have been consistently important in helping us reach good decisions to ensure the future not only of the foreign policy for each Member State, but also the European Union as a whole and I do thank you for that.

As you said, not surprisingly the focus of our conversations today is on our neighbourhood both south and east. Your comments about Serbia and Kosovo are well made, the Prime Ministers of both will be visiting me in Brussels again tomorrow to continue discussions at what I think is our fifteenth meeting. I always pay tribute to them for the work that they have done.

Egypt has been high on our agenda, especially with the visits that I have made; I have been there eleven times in the last few years, most recently as you know only a few weeks ago. We continue to be in daily contact with the people of Egypt. It is extremely important that we continue to support the aspirations of the people who began the Revolution in 2011 and who still aspire to a strong, democratic future.

And when it comes to Syria, I think everyone has been really horrified by the reports of the chemical attack. I have spoken of course with colleagues on the Foreign Affairs Council, Secretary Kerry and with Minister Lavrov about this. I think two things are especially important.

## **P R E S S**

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First is to ensure the inspectors who are in Syria are able to examine the evidence as quickly as possible and reach clear conclusions about what looks like an attack of this kind.

Secondly, of course the Security Council is extremely important in this. It is the role of the Security Council to look and see how the international community can and should respond but that does not excuse the rest of us from considering very carefully what we need to do. The position that I have laid out for well over a year is that ultimately we have to find a political process that is going to bring peace and security to Syria and we have talked often about Geneva Two.

The continuation of the process that began in Geneva - the venue is irrelevant, the process is what matters - and in my conversations with both the United States and with Russia I have said that more than ever we need to find a way to stop this violence for all time and we need to find a way that is going to bring peace and security back to the people.

Of course, a lot of countries are considering very carefully the implications of this attack but as yet I don't think there have been any decisions made. However, as I have said before the most important thing in the end is we have to find a political solution to this and quickly.

We are also looking forward to the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius which will be another occasion when we reinforce our links with our eastern neighbours. We are looking forward to association agreements, our strong trade relationships, our political links with all partner countries and I hope that we will have a very successful summit and use the opportunity to focus on where that relationship will go in the future.

As I began, more than anything it has been a good opportunity for me to come and talk with one of the foreign ministers who have been on Foreign Affairs Councils longer than I have and therefore brings his wisdom to bear on a number of things.

Thank you.

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