



EUROPEAN UNION



Brussels, 18 August 2011  
13488/1/11 REV 1  
PRESSE 282

**Declaration by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton,  
on behalf of the European Union on EU action following the  
escalation of violent repression in Syria**

The EU condemns in the strongest terms the brutal campaign Bashar al-Assad and his regime are waging against their own people. In recent weeks the Syrian leadership has stepped up its violent crackdown against peaceful protesters and resorted to large-scale use of military force in the cities of Hama, Deir al-Zour and Lattakia. This has led to the killing or injury of many Syrian citizens. Further casualties and new refugees were reported after the Palestinian camp of al-Ramal was attacked. These developments are unacceptable and intolerable.

The EU has repeatedly emphasised that the brutal repression must be stopped, detained protesters released, free access by international humanitarian and human rights organizations and media allowed, and a genuine and inclusive national dialogue launched. The Syrian leadership, however, has remained defiant to calls from the EU as well as the broad international community including Syria's own neighbours. This shows that the Syrian regime is unwilling to change. The President's promises of reform have lost all credibility as reforms cannot succeed under permanent repression. The EU notes the complete loss of Bashar al-Assad's legitimacy in the eyes of the Syrian people and the necessity for him to step aside.

At the same time, the EU is proceeding to further action. We have been reaching out to our partners in the region and calling for a Special Session of the UN Human Rights Council on Syria. The addition of further names to the list of those targeted by the EU restrictive measures is under preparation. Moreover, the EU is moving ahead with discussing further restrictive measures that will broaden its sanctions against the Syrian regime. By these efforts we continue to aim at assisting the Syrian people to achieve their legitimate aspirations.

**P R E S S**

The Candidate Countries Croatia\*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, Montenegro\* and Iceland<sup>+</sup>, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, and the EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

\* Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area