



EUROPEAN UNION

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## **Statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton on the fall of Sirte and reports of the death of Colonel Gaddafi**

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

*"The fall of Sirte marks the end of the Gaddafi era. Libya is now under the full control of National Transitional Council forces. After ten months of extraordinary sacrifices, the Libyan people can say with pride and confidence that they have shaken off a regime that terrorised and oppressed for more than 40 years. They can now look to the future.*

*Reports of Colonel Gaddafi's death have not yet been confirmed. If confirmed, his death brings closure to a tragic period in the lives of so many Libyans.*

*Libya is entering a process of transition. It is important that its leadership unites to build a democratic future for the country in full respect for human rights. While the crimes of the past must be addressed, the leadership must also seek a path of national reconciliation. The EU has stood by the Libyan people during these struggles. We have been present in Tripoli and Benghazi. We have provided substantial humanitarian assistance. We have already supported civil society and we are now working with international partners to respond to Libya's post-conflict needs. The EU will remain a strong and committed partner in the future. "*

For more information see attachment.

# **P R E S S**

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## EU support to Libya

From the start of the Libyan crisis, the EU has stood by the people of Libya in their quest for freedom. Together with the international community, it will continue to help Libya's process of democratic transition and economic reconstruction.

The broad, comprehensive and swift response of the EU covers a wide range of short- to long-term actions.

### Humanitarian assistance

The EU has provided more than €156.5 million in humanitarian support - with €80.5 million coming from the EU budget. It has mobilised EU civil protection teams and assets to alleviate the plight of civilians both in Libya and at its borders. Since the beginning of the crisis, the European Commission's humanitarian teams have been working on the ground with humanitarian partners to ensure that priority needs are met and aid is adequately coordinated both in Libya and in neighbouring countries.

### Support to the democratic transition and economic development

Following the setting up of a Liaison Office in Benghazi (21 May) designed to coordinate Member State activities and give immediate support to the National Transitional Council and civil society, a new EU office has been opened in Tripoli, which is soon to become an EU Delegation.

Beyond tackling the most pressing humanitarian needs, the EU is already preparing both immediate measures to support the stabilisation priorities of the National Transitional Council (NTC), as well as longer-term support programmes. It was agreed at the international conference in Paris on 2 September 2011 that the EU will conduct the needs assessment for the following sectors: border management; strengthening civil society and women's rights, and media/communications, while the UN and the World Bank, with which the EU is working very closely, will lead assessments in other areas. An ongoing EU mission in Libya that began on 10 September started preparation of the needs assessments and on planning the provision of immediate support, in close collaboration with the NTC. The EU has already deployed experts in communications, civil society, border management and security, and procurement.

In addition to its humanitarian assistance, the European Commission can make up to €25 million available for immediate stabilisation needs, including through the re-activation of programmes in the field of migration that were suspended when conflict began. Building on activities already underway with the NTC and civil society groups (initially launched in the Benghazi area), this includes:

- Short-term technical assistance to the NTC to build up state institutions;
- Strengthening respect for human rights and democratisation;
- Strengthening civil society and re-building of livelihoods through civil society;
- Health: support for urgent needs resulting from the conflict;
- Migration: support to issues related to displaced people and border controls;
- Security sector.

The European Commission is ready to refocus medium term funding foreseen for Libya of €60 million on the needs of the new Libyan authorities in areas such as democratisation and civil society, public administration capacity building and social and economic development. This longer-term support programme will be prepared together with the new Libyan authorities.

Libya is a resource-rich country. In parallel with assistance, steps have been taken to lift restrictions on a range of economic entities which, previously under the control of the regime, were subject to sanctions.

#### Towards a long lasting partnership

The EU also stands ready to resume negotiations on a Framework Agreement which can serve as a basis for political, economic, social and cultural dialogue and cooperation with the new Libya, whenever the new authorities decide that is the right moment to do so. The same principle applies to the possibility of having Libya joining regional initiatives where the EU is involved.

The developments in Libya are giving fresh momentum to the Arab Spring. The European Union stands by the people in the region and supports their democratic aspirations and choices. This is reflected in the Communication of the Commission and the High Representative 'A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity' (8 March 2011), which lays the foundation on which that support will be built in coming years, as well as in their Communication 'A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood' which gives orientations of the new European Neighbourhood Policy (25 May 2011).

For more information:

10/10/2011 - Council conclusions on Libya:

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/125012.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/125012.pdf)

22/09/2011 - EU implements latest UN decisions in support of Libya:

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/124700.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/124700.pdf)

01/09/2011 - Q/A: The European Commission's humanitarian assistance in Libya:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/11/572&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

All news on Libya: [http://eeas.europa.eu/libya/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/libya/index_en.htm)