Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton at the Cairo conference on Libya¹

Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, made today the following remarks at the Cairo conference on Libya:

"Today's meeting has shown once again the determination of key international organizations to bring about a quick and satisfactory end to the Libyan crisis.

I'd like to thank Ban Ki-moon for bringing us together just a day after the first meeting of the Contact Group.

What we see today is part of an ongoing process and it highlights for me the intense and extremely important collaboration and cooperation that we have over the situation in Libya.

We remain in the European Union absolutely resolute in seeking a rapid political transition in Libya. We have been working hard to ensure that the Security Council Resolutions 1970 and 1973 are fully implemented.

The Libyan regime must end violence against citizens and respect human rights.

Those working within the regime have a choice. They can either continue to associate themselves with the brutal repression of Colonel Kadhafi or they can work for that orderly transition to democracy.

¹ Check against delivery
We remain concerned about the humanitarian situation in Libya and on its borders. The EU has already pledged 96 million euros in humanitarian assistance.

And we have decided that, if requested by the UN and only if requested, we would conduct an operation to support humanitarian assistance.

We continue to keep up the economic pressure on the regime. We have introduced strong restrictive measures that target both individuals and companies (39 individuals and 46 entities). And we stand ready to take additional measures as needed to prevent further funding of the regime.

Beyond the current crisis, the EU stands ready to support the Libyan people in the longer term.

Together with the Arab League, the African Union, the United Nations, and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, we want to play a crucial role in helping to stabilise the country, in building a constitutional state and developing democracy and the rule of law.

Although the situation on the ground remains uncertain, the main parameters of a solution are clear.

More than anything, the first priority must be a cease-fire, the protection of citizens, and clearing the way for humanitarian assistance.

The only solutions to end the Libyan crisis are political. We believe that the regime has lost all legitimacy and should leave power immediately and allow the Libyan people to determine their own future.

This must happen through a process of dialogue between the different parts of Libyan society.

It is crucial that such a dialogue leads to a democratic transition.

This process must be led by the Libyan people and must respect the territorial integrity of the country.

I look forward to continuing our close links to the UN, African Union, Arab League and OIC as we seek a better future for Libya and its people."