

CAIRO DECLARATION

**Second European Union-League of Arab States
Foreign Affairs Ministerial Meeting
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
13 November 2012**

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the European Union and of the League of Arab States, meeting on the occasion of the second ministerial conference between the European Union and the League of Arab States in Cairo on 13 November 2012, at the invitation of HE Catherine Ashton, European Union High Representative, HE Dr. Nabil Elaraby, Secretary General of the League of Arab States, and HE Dr. Adnan Mansour, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of Lebanon;

Engaging together to tackle the common political and economic challenges;

Supporting the ongoing historical changes across the Middle East and North Africa region and determined to work together towards taking concrete steps responding to these changes;

Conscious of the opportunities these changes present to the people of the region to build up more stable, prosperous, and inclusive societies;

Considering that the development and the strengthening of the relations between the European Union and the League of Arab States will contribute to regional security, prosperity and democracy in full respect of international law, the United Nations Charter and the relevant UN resolutions.

And recalling the "Malta Communiqué" adopted at the first ministerial meeting between the European Union and the League of Arab States on 11 February 2008;

Have adopted the following Declaration.

1. The Ministers welcomed the new intensified relationship between the European Union and the League of Arab States through the dialogue established by H.E. Catherine Ashton and H.E. Dr. Nabil Elaraby, as well as by the new mechanism of Senior Officials' Meetings between the two organisations. The Ministers agreed on the importance of developing further this structured political dialogue based on regular meetings at all levels.

2. The Ministers stressed the importance of developing bilateral cooperation between the EU and LAS through concrete projects. The Ministers welcomed the inauguration of the Crisis Room at the headquarters of the League of Arab States as the first operational result of their cooperation. The Ministers also noted with satisfaction the cooperation already undertaken on the training of LAS electoral observers and diplomatic training.

3. The Ministers took note of the recommendations submitted by HE Catherine Ashton and HE Dr. Nabil Elaraby for a working program on bilateral cooperation, including developing cooperation in the fields of energy, culture, empowerment of women, legal affairs, human rights, humanitarian assistance, crisis management, and electoral process. This cooperation will be implemented in complementarity and synergy with existing international and regional organisations and initiatives. They reaffirmed that the European Commission – LAS Malta Liaison Office will be an important instrument to implement such projects. The Ministers encouraged Euro-Arab business and investment organizations to hold meetings to explore ways of promoting trade exchanges and opening up investment opportunities for both parties. The Ministers reaffirmed the important role of civil society and free media in participating in the establishment of the foundations of democracy, rule of law and respect of human rights, and they highlighted the contribution of European and Arab civil society organizations to the development of the relations between the European Union and the League of Arab States.

4. The Ministers called on the European Parliament and the Arab Parliament to strengthen communication between them in order to realize the ambition of peoples of the two regions to establish the principles of freedom, justice and human rights, as well as to promote mutual respect and tolerance between people belonging to different cultural, religious and ethnic groups.

5. The Ministers welcomed the process of democratic reform undertaken in a number of countries in the region, and reaffirmed their continued support to it. In this regard, the Ministers welcomed the recent successful holding of democratic Parliamentary and Presidential elections in various Arab States.

6. The Ministers underlined their commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights, including the right to economic and social development, freedom of expression and the freedom of religion or belief and condemned all forms of incitement to hatred and intolerance, in accordance with international legislation on human rights. The Ministers emphasized the need to ensure gender equality and full respect of human rights for all people. The Ministers condemned any advocacy of religious hatred in accordance with HR council resolution 16/18.

7. The Ministers also underlined the necessity of a continued dialogue and understanding between people and of the respect for their religious and cultural diversity; of participating effectively in initiatives aiming at reinforcing intercultural and interreligious dialogue, such as UNESCO, Anna Lindh Foundation and the Alliance of Civilizations. They also called on human societies to adhere to tolerance and understanding, and the pursuit of peaceful means in the expression of their opinions. The Ministers welcomed the establishment of the International King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue in Vienna, which shall be officially inaugurated on 26 November 2012, and Jordan's World Interfaith Harmony Week initiative that was adopted unanimously by the United Nations in 2010.

8. The Ministers agreed on the importance of cooperation to freeze and recover funds and assets that were misappropriated or subject of UNSC resolutions. The Ministers committed themselves to work together in this regard and to eliminate the obstacles that may obstruct this process in accordance with the rule of law and independence of the judiciary.

9. The Ministers reiterated their condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, irrespective of its motivation, and their determination to eradicate it in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions. They recalled with satisfaction the consensus achieved in the UN General Assembly in June 2012 on the renewal of the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy, and agreed to continue to work on its comprehensive implementation. They also welcomed the signing of the agreement to set up the International Center to Fight Terrorism under the umbrella of the United Nations.

10. The Ministers reaffirmed their shared position that a just, comprehensive peace in the Middle East is a strategic objective and vital for the stability of the region and international peace and security. They reaffirmed their continued support for the Arab peace initiative and recalled inter alia the conclusions of the European Union of December 2009, December 2010, and May 2012. The Ministers called for the removal of all obstacles that prevent an immediate resumption of negotiations between the parties as well the resolution of all issues related to final status (water, security, borders, refugees, Jerusalem) to achieving a solution of two States living side by side in peace and security, on the basis of the relevant UNSC resolutions and other relevant resolutions, the Madrid principles, including land for peace, the Roadmap, and the agreements previously reached by the parties.

The Ministers reaffirmed their shared position not to recognise any changes to the pre-1967 borders other than those agreed by both parties including with regard to Jerusalem. The Ministers stressed their common position that Israeli settlements and the separation barrier built anywhere in the occupied Palestinian territory are illegal under international law and constitute an obstacle to peace. The Ministers expressed deep concern regarding

settler violence in the West Bank. The Arab Ministers expressed their appreciation for the EU's commitment to implement existing EU legislation and bilateral arrangements applicable to settlement products.

The Ministers expressed concern at the recent escalation in and around Gaza and welcomed the Egyptian efforts aimed at reaching a ceasefire. The Ministers condemned all acts of violence against civilians and called for the full implementation of UNSC resolution 1860 and full respect of international humanitarian law.

The Ministers also called to respect the rules of international law, international humanitarian law, human rights law and the Fourth Geneva convention of 1949 in respect of all Palestinian and Arab prisoners and detainees in Israeli prisons.

The Ministers agreed on the need to continue to support Palestinian state-building efforts, both politically and financially, and welcomed the reconfirmation by the international donor community of their assessment of the state readiness of the Palestinian Authority (PA) regarding institutions during last AHLC meeting. They expressed grave concern at the current financial crisis of the PA. They called on Israel to take positive steps to enable sustainable economic development in the Palestinian territories, including in Area C and in the Gaza Strip.

11. The Ministers demanded that the Syrian government immediately and comprehensively halt all forms of killing and violence against the Syrian people and called on all parties to end violence immediately.

The Ministers expressed their deep concern at the deterioration of humanitarian situation and its dangerous consequences, particularly the internal displacement of over two and a half million people as well as the flight of hundreds of thousands to neighboring countries. The Ministers reiterated the urgency to allow immediate humanitarian access to the vulnerable populations and the need for an increased humanitarian assistance to all Syrians. The Ministers stressed the importance of providing humanitarian support to the

Syrian people inside and outside the country, and to neighboring States. They urged all parties to respect international humanitarian law, including the inviolability of all medical facilities, medical personnel and vehicles. They called on all donors to increase their contributions to the latest UN appeals and to realize greater synergy of Arab and international efforts led by UNHCR and other humanitarian relief organizations.

The Ministers welcomed the agreement reached by Syrian opposition groups in the recent meeting held in Doha under the auspices of the Emir of Qatar. This agreement represents a major step in forming a broad and representative opposition. The Ministers welcomed the formation of the Syrian National Coalition for Opposition and Revolutionary Forces, building on the results of the Syrian Opposition meeting held on 2-3 July 2012 in Cairo under the auspices of the League of Arab States. The Ministers noted of the League of Arab States resolution and took note that EU Foreign Ministers will discuss this issue in their meeting of November 19, 2012. They called on all opposition groups to adhere to the National Coalition and on the National Coalition to engage with all sections of Syrian society.

The Ministers reaffirmed their full support to the mission of HE Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, the Joint Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations and the Secretary General of the League of Arab States. They called the Syrian National Coalition to engage in an extensive dialogue with him with a view of seeking a peaceful transfer of authority. They emphasized the need for a genuine political transition in accordance with a timetable to be agreed by the UNSC. That transition should meet the legitimate demands of all Syrian people and establish a transitional body. In that context, they reaffirmed the necessity of pursuing efforts, in line with the Final Geneva Communiqué of 30 June 2012, with a view to agree on a UN Security Council resolution that calls for an immediate ceasefire and would be binding on all parties.

The Ministers expressed deep concern at the human rights situation and demanded that all those responsible for human rights violations and abuses be held accountable.

12. The ministers expressed their concern on the lack of progress towards resolution of the territorial conflict between the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran of to the issue of the three islands of Greater Tunb, Smaller Tunb, and Abu Musa. The ministers reiterated their support for a peaceful solution to the conflict in accordance with international law, either through direct negotiations, or by referring the issue to the International Court of Justice.

13. The Ministers strongly condemned the terrorist attack in Beirut on 19 October 2012. They expressed their solidarity with Lebanon and condemned any attempt to destabilize Lebanon through any use of violence or intimidation for political purposes. The Ministers urged all Lebanese to uphold the key objective of national unity and called on all parties and political leaders to continue engaging in the National Dialogue to actively pursue the resolution of all issues of national unity. They stressed the importance of Lebanon's strong, independent, impartial and democratic public institutions and the respect of judicial process. They also stressed their support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon.

14. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of preserving Yemen's unity, respecting its territorial integrity, and develop a national dialogue. They highlighted the need to reinforce international assistance to Yemen in order to address the humanitarian and economic challenges. They stressed the need t to fully implement the GCC initiative and achieve security and stability including by preventing radicalization, fighting against terrorism, and meeting the humanitarian and economic challenges. The Ministers commended the efforts of the tri-partite presidency (Saudi Arabia - Britain - Yemen), in addition to the Saudi efforts and ministers of the European Union in the success of the conferences of the Friends of Yemen, which took place in Riyadh and New York, in addition to the donors' conference hosted by the KSA in Riyadh.

15. The Ministers expressed their concern about the instability in the Sahel region, which poses a threat to regional and international peace and security. They welcomed the 2056

and 2071 UNSC Resolutions and supported the efforts of the African Union, ECOWAS and neighbouring countries towards a sustainable political solution that guarantees the unity and territorial integrity of Mali, and an end to terrorism and organised crime. The Ministers reiterated their readiness to provide support to resolve the crisis in Mali through coordinated actions for immediate and long-term needs, encompassing security, development, humanitarian issues and political dialogue. They welcomed the appointment of Mr. Romano Prodi as the UN Special Envoy for Sahel. They considered that finding a solution to the situation in Mali, leading to a stable, legitimate, democratically elected government and a return of government control in the North was essential.

16. The Ministers welcomed the signing of agreements between Sudan and South Sudan, calling on the two parties to finalise negotiations of outstanding issues, including Abyei and disputed/claimed areas, in full implementation of UNSCR 2046, and recalled the international community's commitment to assist in the implementation of the agreements. They called on all countries to provide economic and financial assistance. They denounced the recent attack on the weapons factory in Khartoum and called to respect the sovereignty of Sudan.

17. The Ministers confirmed their support to the process of Somalia's national reconciliation. They reiterated their support for Somalia's territorial integrity, renewed their support for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and encouraged new donors to finance AMISOM and Somalia's security forces. They also welcomed the Conclusions of the Conference on combating piracy which was held in the United Arab Emirates in 2012.

18. The Ministers warned of the threat of the closing of maritime passageways, particularly the Strait of Hormuz. They reaffirmed their cooperation to prevent such an occurrence due to its repercussions for the world economy and international maritime activity.

19. While recognizing that the situation has improved thanks to international efforts, the Ministers reiterated their concern about the threat of piracy. They recognized shared responsibility in fighting piracy based on the full respect of the applicable international law and highlighted the importance of reinforcing maritime capacities and coordination in the broader region and addressing the root causes of this phenomenon through a comprehensive approach that takes into account inter alia its socio-economic aspects.

20. The Ministers agreed to hold their next meeting in the EU in 2014.