

As the Chairman of the Delegation for the Relations with the Korean Peninsula I ask the Plenary to strongly condemn yesterday's artillery attack by the DPRK on a South Korean Island. There have been severe casualties among the South Korean military and the civilian population. Villages were burning, and the population had to be evacuated.

We welcome the announcement of President Lee Myung-bak that intends to avoid the escalation on the Korean Peninsula.

We welcome that Baroness Ashton, the High Representative is acting in a concerted manner with other international actors, our allies, and our strategic partner the Republic of Korea, in condemning this clear violation of the UN-Korean-Armistice Agreement. We also expect China to clearly condemn this act.

We call upon the DPRK to avoid any further escalation and to undertake all necessary efforts to maintain peace and stability.

We would like to convey our condolences to the families of the victims.