Madam High Representative,
Dear Cathy,

France, Germany, Italy, Poland and Spain thank you for the efforts you have undertaken during this last semester to firmly put Common Security and Defence Policy issues on the European agenda.

Instability and proliferation of crises on the one side, and scarcity of resources on the other side, have significantly raised expectations as to the effectiveness and credibility of EU action. This is why we remain committed more than ever to the development of robust and efficient tools for the CSDP, as emphasized in our respective letters (6th December 2010, 5th May 2011).

In this context, we warmly welcome your excellent report to the 18th July Foreign Affairs Council on the implementation of the CSDP, which received overwhelming support from Member States. It accurately identifies key deficiencies and clearly sets out the way forward. We believe it remains the most comprehensive basis for further work on all of the issues covered therein: capabilities, including civil-military planning and conduct capability, Battlegroups, and EU/NATO relations.

The ministerial discussion in July definitively proved that there is a strong political will to continue the process on the basis of your report and ample room for improvement in all of the above areas. Bearing in mind your incisive comment on the challenge for Europe to do more with less, these tasks should be taken forward as a matter of urgency. France, Germany, Italy, Poland and Spain remain at your disposal to support your work in this regard.

Following our last FAC discussion, we also encourage you to examine all institutional and legal options available to member states, including Permanent Structured Cooperation, to develop critical CSDP capabilities, notably a permanent planning and conduct capability.
We would appreciate if you presented the conclusions of the work during a FAC meeting in early autumn with a view to achieving tangible results by the end of the year, as stated in the January FAC conclusions.

We are copying this letter to our colleagues Ministers.

Please accept the assurances of our highest consideration,

Franco Frattini
Italy

Trinidad Jimenez
Spain

Alain Juppé
France

Guido Westerwelle
Germany

Radosław Sikorski
Poland