Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton
- Human Rights Council ends in Geneva

"I am pleased that the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) session which has just ended has demonstrated that the international community will, together, continue to condemn the most serious abuses of human rights around the world. Be it in Syria, Mali or Sudan, the Council has taken decisions which keep up the pressure of independent and thorough scrutiny, reporting and recommendations. Maintaining international scrutiny is an essential component of the European Union’s human rights strategy. The EU engaged actively with all partners, starting from the very first day when we co-organised a high level forum on Syria, allowing human rights activists and journalists to bring their personal testimonies to the attention of the UN membership.

Inevitably, Syria was the dominant focus of this session. I welcome the adoption of a new resolution by an overwhelming majority of countries, which puts a strong focus on accountability. The report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry which is led by Paulo Pinheiro made for grim reading, exposing even more the atrocities which the Syrian people have suffered for so long. Its work must go on, and will be substantially strengthened, including through the appointment of Carla del Ponte and of Vitit Muntarbhorn as new members.

In Sudan too the EU was eager to secure a means of impartial, internationally sponsored country-wide monitoring – including in Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan. We also sought to prolong cooperation to help South Sudan to strengthen its nascent national human rights mechanisms. Finally, it was extremely important for the EU that the Council keep the situation in Mali under close scrutiny. The EU warmly welcomes the leadership shown by African states themselves in bringing these situations to the attention of the Human Rights Council."

PRESS

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