New York, 13 February 2013

Mr President,

I would like to thank you for inviting me to address the Security Council.

Let me first of all congratulate the Republic of Korea for its Presidency and membership of the Council, as well as Argentina, Australia, Rwanda and Luxemburg for their election to the UN Security Council, especially Luxembourg as a first time member.

I would like today to present the different ways in which the European Union contributes to international peace and security.

Our contribution should be seen in the context of its strong and long-standing commitment to effective multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core. I want to pay tribute to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, a good partner and a good friend. The EU has always strongly supported his action - his current efforts to broker peace in the Great Lakes region is just one case in point.
I believe that the European Union's contribution is three fold:

– Our ability to marshall a wide range of instruments in what we call a comprehensive approach;

– Our direct involvement in international negotiations, including mediation, on behalf of the international community;

– By working closely with our international and regional partners, where only collective efforts can deliver results.

Mr President,

A particular strength of the European Union is its ability to respond to a crisis with a wide range of tools and instruments, short and long term, humanitarian and development, security and political.

We are particularly pleased that the long-standing engagement of the European Union in Somalia and the Horn of Africa, as set out in our strategic framework for the Horn of Africa, and carried out in close cooperation with the United Nations, has contributed to the recent breakthrough in both the political process and in terms of security in that region.

Through our missions, we have contributed to greatly reducing piracy, which dropped by 95% over the past two years. Through our development cooperation and political support, we contribute to lasting security, deep democracy and prosperity.

I was pleased that the Somali President, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, expressed his country's appreciation for the European Union's efforts at the end of last month, but he also called for continued and comprehensive engagement of the EU and the international community. It is imperative that we all join in this support to ensure effective and continuous progress, as the UNSG's report emphasised.

Our support to Mali and the Sahel should also be seen in the context of a comprehensive European engagement. The current crisis in Mali provides us with a challenging test case: the threat posed by terrorist groups is not only a threat to the existence of one country, but to the security of a region and the international community. It calls for swift and coordinated international action, for which the UN is playing a leading role.

The situation on the ground is changing rapidly: thanks to the intervention of France, which responded to President Traoré's appeal for help, we are witnessing rapid advances in the liberation of the north of Mali. We have also seen progress regarding the adoption of a Road Map by Malian authorities to restore democracy and constitutional rule and faster deployment of African led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA). For all that, challenges and threats still remain.

What we call the EU's comprehensive approach is an integral part of this international response: humanitarian aid has been increased from 58 million euros in 2012 by an additional 20 million euros.
We have also contributed through security related measures, like the EU training mission to help the Malian Army to be restructured under civilian authority. We have given considerable financial and logistical support to AFISMA. We have made available 50 million euros through the African peace facility and established a clearing house to channel national contributions.

Our political support to Mali focuses on supporting the concrete implementation of the roadmap, support for the electoral process and, what is extremely important, an inclusive national dialogue - especially with representatives of the people from the north of Mali. We have also provided economic support by resuming EU development aid. We are making available more than 250 million euros for new projects across the entire country and for budgetary assistance.

Mr President,

It is important that Malian authorities investigate all allegations of human rights abuses. The EU supports the United Nations intention to deploy Human Rights observers to Mali and we also welcome the decision by the International Criminal Court to open investigations.

Lasting peace and reconstruction require long-term commitments by the international community. The donors' conference held on 29 January, as well as the Support and Follow Up Group on the situation in Mali - we were proud to host the third ministerial of that last week -- helped further to mobilize international support.

But we need to do more. It is important to stress the central coordinating role that has been assigned to the United Nations under Security Council resolution 2085. We appreciate the leadership the UN Security Council has shown, as well as the recognition that was given to EU efforts. All of us need to support the UN in taking on greater responsibility, with for example a peace keeping operation, particularly in the crucial stabilisation phase.

The EU will also continue to play its role in broader framework of Sahel Strategy, and looks forward to working closely with UN Special Envoy representative Romano Prodi in the context of the upcoming integrated UN strategy for the Sahel.

Mr President,

In my role as High Representative/Vice President, I'm responsible for dealing with the Iranian nuclear issue.

This issue remains top of the international agenda. Based on the mandate received from the UN Security Council and together with the E3+3 we are engaging in intensive diplomatic efforts to seek a negotiated solution that meets the international community's concerns about the Iranian nuclear programme.

After lengthy consultations, we were able to agree on the next round of talks to be held on 26 February in Kazakhstan. We hope Iran will come to this negotiation with flexibility and that we can make substantial progress.

Our strength and credibility in negotiating with Iran derives from the E3+3, but also from the more general support that we receive from the international community. I am very grateful for the constant support of the UN Security Council and I would add that our cooperation with and support to the International Atomic Energy Agency is also important.
We remain determined to work towards a solution of the Iranian nuclear issue based on the dual track approach. There is no doubt that the pressure of sanctions has been instrumental in bringing Iran back to the negotiating table - but sanctions cannot be an end in themselves. The key is for Iran to comply fully with its international obligations.

Rightly, like the UN Security Council, the EU has condemned in the strongest possible terms the latest DPRK nuclear test. It is a further blatant challenge to the global non-proliferation regime and an outright violation of the DPRK's international obligations not to produce or test nuclear weapons, in particular under UN Security Council Resolutions.

It remains vital therefore that the international community stays united and shows its determination. The EU will work with key partners, especially with this Council, to build a firm and unified response aiming at demonstrating to the DPRK that there are consequences for its continued violations. We once again urge the DPRK to abandon its nuclear weapons programme, including its uranium enrichment programme, in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

Mr President,

I am also directly responsible for facilitating the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo.

So far this has led to concrete results:

- We have an agreement to take forward the implementation of Integrated Border/Boundary Management (IBBM); as a result 4 gates are now open and fully operational;
- An agreement on arrangements for the protection of religious and cultural heritage;
- Furthermore, an agreement to appoint liaison officers to be hosted in the EU premises in Belgrade and Pristina.

As you may have seen, last week the two Presidents - Serbian President Nikolic and Kosovo President Jahjaga - met in Brussels for the first time, which marked an important step in the normalisation between Belgrade and Pristina.

The process continues: a new meeting with the two Prime Ministers will take place next week in Brussels. I want to take this opportunity to commend PM Dacic and PM Thaci for the way they have approached these discussions. This process is not easy for either of them, but both know that they are doing the right thing and they have our full support. I count also on the support of this Council.

Mr President,

We are also working closely with partners to address some of the most difficult challenges to international peace and security. I want to mention briefly to Middle East Peace Process and Syria.

Mr President,

In the Middle East Peace Process, time has now come for concrete steps towards peace: we need direct and substantial negotiations without pre-conditions and we need to achieve a lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on two-states. A solution that addresses both the Palestinian aspirations for statehood and sovereignty and the Israeli concern for security.
We believe that there is an urgent need for renewed, structured and substantial peace efforts in 2013 and will require work with all international partners, including the UN and the League of Arab States. The EU position remains that we will not recognise any changes to the pre-1967 borders other than those agreed by the parties.

And we suggest the following parameters that could serve as a basis for a resumption of negotiations:

− Security arrangements that respect Palestinians' sovereignty, protect Israeli's security and prevent the resurgence of terrorism.

− There is a need for an agreed just and fair solution to the refugee question.

− Fulfilment of the aspirations of both parties for the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of both states.

Mr President,

It will be important to set up a framework for negotiations between the parties. I would like to highlight the role of the UN Secretary General in the Quartet. We also strongly support the important work done by UNRWA and Special Coordinator Robert Serry on the ground. We will continue to work with all those who are willing to join the quest for peace, stability and prosperity in the Middle East. Particular regional involvement is crucial. I would like to comment the role of the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, Mr Nabil El Araby, Jordan, Egypt and other Arab countries, as well as Egypt's role in Palestinian reconciliation and in maintaining the Gaza ceasefire.

Mr President,

In our efforts to support Syria we coordinate closely with all partners on the bilateral, multilateral and inter-institutional levels. The EU gives lasting support to the UN through common actions and initiatives, which are crucial to preserve the role of UNSC. This includes tackling grave human rights abuses and war crimes.

We stand firmly behind the complex mission of Joint Special Representative Brahimi: we hope his plan will result in concrete initiatives by the UN Security Council to make the Geneva communiqué operational. We also welcome the recent statements made by the President of the Syrian Coalition, M. Al Khatib, who proposed to enter discussions with acceptable representatives of the Syrian government. We encourage the Syrian authorities to seize this opportunity.

If, together, we can set up the right conditions and a timetable for discussions and add important confidence building measures, we might be able to build a new momentum on what has been so far a most difficult challenge.

In addition to the political efforts, the EU remains an important donor of humanitarian aid to Syria, the financial support of the EU and its member states is €600M.

We have further imposed EU wide sanctions against the regime and we are also working on improving the operational capacity of the Syrian Opposition Coalition (SOC), which we accept as legitimate representatives of the Syrian people.
Mr President,

It will be equally important to engage on planning for the future and to closely involve the Syrian Opposition Coalition in the process. The EU will support a political transition with effective measures on the ground, institutional and economic recovery, post-conflict accountability and needs/disaster assessment.

Mr President,

I have not been able today to refer to all the different contributions of the European Union to the work of the United Nations. I have limited myself very much to the most pressing issues.

We harbour a strong belief in effective multilateralism and wish to be a good and supportive partner for the United Nations.

Let me end by acknowledging the great responsibility of this Council in steering the international community away from conflict and confrontation. In carrying out your tasks, you can count on the full commitment and support of the EU.

Thank you.