



EUROPEAN UNION

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**Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton  
on EU support for a Conference on the establishment of a Middle East  
zone free of weapons of mass destruction**

Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, made today the following statement:

*“In view of the 2015 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and its preparatory process, I would like to reiterate that the EU has been committed to establishing a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction ever since the Barcelona Declaration of 1995.*

*It remains a strategic priority of the European Union to support peace and stability in the entire Middle East. I therefore expressed regret in my statement of 24 November 2012 that the Conference on the establishment of such a zone, agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference and scheduled to take place in 2012, was postponed.*

*Today, the EU continues to fully support the on-going preparations for a successful Conference and in particular the tireless efforts of its Facilitator, Ambassador Laajava of Finland, and his team, to lay the groundwork in this respect. I therefore call on all States in the region to urgently and proactively engage with the Facilitator and the Conveners with the aim of enabling the Conference to be convened as soon as possible this year, on the basis of arrangements freely entered into between the States of the region.”*

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**P R E S S**

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