



Athens, 05 April 2014
140405/01

R E M A R K S

by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton following the Gymnich meeting

"Thank you very much, Deputy Prime Minister, and your team for the excellent organisation of this meeting and this wonderful venue. We had a really interesting two days and in this setting we've had the opportunity to talk about our Neighbourhood, both South and East, and our relations with Strategic Partners.

Not surprisingly, Ukraine was top of our agenda, and I can remind everyone that we remain united in our determination to act together to deal with the threat to Ukraine's sovereignty and stability.

I invited this morning our candidate countries to join us so we could talk with them as well, about the latest developments in our Neighbourhood.

We had a very good discussion, we covered a range of different issues, we talked about relations in the Western Balkans, we talked about the ongoing challenges that we see in Syria, and our concerns about Libya and also the work that we're doing on all of our Neighbourhood countries to help them develop economically and politically. We think of the successes of Tunisia and we also think of the challenges currently in Egypt.

We welcomed too our dear friend Elmar Brok, the chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, who came to join us yesterday, again, in order to give us his perspectives and the perspective of the European Parliament on some of these issues. So we've had an important two days of deep discussion.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

Michael Mann +32 498 999 780 - +32 2 584 9780- Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu [@EUHighRepSpox](https://twitter.com/EUHighRepSpox)
Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu [@AshtonSpox](https://twitter.com/AshtonSpox) Maja
Sebastien Brabant +32 460 75 09 98 - Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu

Follow us on Twitter [@eu_eeas](https://twitter.com/eu_eeas)

www.facebook.com/EuropeanExternalActionService

www.eeas.europa.eu

The Gymnich is a place where Ministers can talk freely about the issues of concern and we're able to relate to each other in terms of how we take forward our policy. And we continue as ever, to develop the work that we are doing.

We have the elections in Afghanistan which we're monitoring carefully. This will be an historic moment if we get this right, this democratic transition. We want to see everybody participating, including all the women of Afghanistan, and we welcome what's been done to try and prepare for these elections. The latest information that I have has been that things are going forward and we wait to see now what the results will bring.

I also want to impress on everyone our complete support for Secretary Kerry and the work that he is doing on the Middle East Peace Process, in what is an extremely challenging time."
