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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

## R E M A R K S

### **by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton following the Foreign Affairs Council, 22 July 2014**

*"Not surprisingly the developments in Ukraine, and particularly following the downing of the Malaysian Airlines flight MH17, were on the top of our agenda.*

*I asked ministers at the beginning of the meeting to join with me and have a minute of silence to pay tribute to all those who died aboard the plane.*

*We think of their families and friends from across the European Union but across the world too.*

*And we then invited Dutch Foreign Minister Timmermans to speak to us and conveyed to him and through him to the families of the victims and the people and governments of all nations our deepest condolences.*

*It is crucial that the separatist groups in the area ensure full, immediate and safe and secure access to the site of the crash and the surrounding area so that we can see identification and recovery of the remains of all victims as quickly and respectfully as possible.*

*We need to see the crash site secured and preserved so that there can genuinely be a full and transparent and independent international investigation.*

#### FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

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*Those directly or indirectly responsible for bringing down this plane must be held accountable and brought to justice.*

*And we call on all states and parties to fully cooperate in this. We in particular call on Russia to actively use its influence over the illegally armed groups to achieve access to the site.*

*And we urge Russia to stop the increasing flow of weapons, equipment and militants across the border, so we can achieve rapid and tangible de-escalation, and we ask it to withdraw its additional troops from the border area.*

*We today decided to accelerate the preparation of targeted measures agreed at the summit last week, in particular to put in place very quickly a list of entities and people, including from Russia, under the new, enhanced criteria, and to expand the restrictive measures to target individuals or companies who actively benefit from support of the Russian decision makers responsible for the annexation of Crimea or the destabilisation of eastern Ukraine.*

*We are also ready to introduce without delay a package of further significant restrictive measures, if we do not see full and immediate cooperation.*

*We have asked the Commission and the External Action Service to present proposals for action, including on access to capital markets, defence, dual use goods and sensitive technologies, including in the energy sector. These proposals will be presented on Thursday.*

*We will have further discussion on this later this afternoon, when we will meet Ukrainian Foreign Minister Klimkin during the Eastern Partnership Ministerial Meeting.*

*This involves all 6 Eastern Partners and we will discuss the way forward, with a particular focus on the implementation of Association Agreements including Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas.*

*And in that respect I am particularly pleased that following a swift ratification by Moldova we have now also seen a unanimous ratification by Georgia of the Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement and I want to congratulate them for that achievement.*

*We also discussed the situation in Iraq and on the Middle East Peace Process.*

*We are extremely concerned of course at the continued escalation of violence in Gaza, and we condemn the serious loss of life.*

*We strongly condemn the indiscriminate firing of rockets into Israel by Hamas and militant groups in the Gaza Strip. These are criminal and unjustifiable acts.*

*And we call for an immediate end to hostilities and welcome very much the ongoing efforts, in particular by Egypt, to achieve a ceasefire.*

*All Member States recognize Israel's legitimate right to defend itself against attacks.*

*But we underline that the Israeli military operation should be proportionate and in line with international humanitarian law.*

*Civilians need to be protected at all times.*

*We are deeply concerned at the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation and ask all sides to meet their obligations and allow safe and urgent humanitarian access in order to have the distribution of assistance.*

*The hostilities of course serve to confirm the unsustainable situation in the Gaza Strip, a place I have visited as you know several times.*

*We are ready, if conditions allow, to contribute to a comprehensive and sustainable solution which meets the security, economic and humanitarian needs of Israelis and Palestinians.*

*Finally we touched upon the current situation in Libya and I have invited all the European envoys to join Bernardino León here in Brussels on Thursday to discuss the current situation.*

*Thank you."*

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