

Catherine Ashton

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and
Vice President of the European Commission

**Remarks by EU High Representative
Catherine Ashton at the end of the
informal EU Foreign Ministers meeting**

Check Against Delivery
Seul le texte prononcé fait foi
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort

EU Foreign Ministers meeting (Gymnich)

Gödöllő, 12 March 2011

Thank you everyone for being here and for waiting for us. As you can imagine there has been a long discussion this morning.

I would like to first of all thank Minister Martonyi and the Hungarian government for the hospitality. This is the second time I have had the privilege of being here.

I would like to express our condolences and solidarity with Japan and the countries hit by the Tsunami. We know that the earthquake and the tsunami have claimed many lives and we express deepest condolences to the people of Japan, particularly those who have lost loved ones in the earthquake and the tsunamis, as well as in other places affected.

We are monitoring the situation closely and we are in touch with Japan and the affected region and we have made it clear that we are ready to assist in any way possible needed. For example, with humanitarian assistance, if that is required; and as regards the nuclear plant, and the impact of that, we are in touch with the relevant authorities to assess that situation too.

Beyond that, the key focus of this informal meeting was to discuss not just with the 27 EU Members but also with the candidate countries the unfolding events in the neighbourhood. We have I think a unique opportunity to make a difference, not by imposing solutions but by providing support to the historic changes going on.

The European Council yesterday endorsed the paper prepared jointly by the Commission and by myself based on three core principles.

Money - resources to support change and to ensure that the economies are able to come through the current situation so that a combination of new investment and the potential for resources to be provided to ensure the transitions are properly resourced.

Market access – the ability to be able to benefit from trade not just by opening markets but by ensuring that countries can have the benefit of that by being to take advantage of it. And that is the sort of thing that we talk around in terms of standards that we require for produce that can be met by help from our experts.

And then mobility; A lot of discussions about the young population and the opportunities that can be provided for students and young people to travel to have their opportunities and education and of course going back to what I have said about trade the needs of businesses to be able to be mobile across the EU and beyond.

So the three Ms (money, market access, mobility).

On Libya, I reported back from the European Council as well. We have clear and strong conclusions. We have started what I would describe as prudent careful planning for all options. We have discussed the situation today amongst ourselves and with the Candidate Countries and from here I will travel to Cairo to consult with the Secretary General of Arab League Amr Moussa and the new Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Egypt. It is of key importance that we continue to move in step with the Arab world and consult regularly with our partners.