



EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT



Brussels, 30 January 2012
EUCO 16/12
PRESSE 30
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Press statement on foreign policy issues

As expressed in the conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council on 23 January 2012 I reiterate the serious and deepening concerns of the Members of the European Council over the **Iranian** nuclear programme and their endorsement to the substantial package of restrictive measures adopted against Iran i.a. in the energy, trade and financial sector. These measures are not directed against the Iranian people. I call on Iran's leadership immediately to suspend its sensitive nuclear activities and abide fully by its international obligations, as outlined by the Foreign Affairs Council on 23 January. The door is open to Iran to engage in serious and meaningful negotiations, and I confirm the EU's commitment to continue to work for a diplomatic solution, in accordance with the dual-track approach.

I welcome the important changes taking place in **Burma/Myanmar** and encourage its Government to maintain its determination to continue on the path of reform. These changes are opening up important new prospects for developing the relationship between the European Union and Burma/Myanmar. I look forward to further progress in the coming weeks, in particular the further release of political prisoners, free and fair elections, and halting ethnic conflicts. As outlined by the Foreign Affairs Council on 23 January, we will continue to ease the EU's restrictive measures if our expectations are met. The members of the European Council reiterate the EU's readiness to assist Burma/Myanmar in advancing reforms.

P R E S S

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Finally, I wish to give voice to my grave concern at the situation in **Syria** and express my outrage over the continuing violence and repression against the Syrian people. The members of the European Council fully endorse the Conclusions adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council on 23 January 2012 and reiterate the Union's call for an immediate end to violence. I take note of the Arab League's decision to suspend its observer mission to Syria in response to the aggravating violence on the part of the Syrian authorities. The EU continues to support the efforts of the League of Arab States aimed at ending the violence in Syria and welcomes the decision of the League of Arab States to increase co-operation with the United Nations. A swift reaction by the UN Security Council is urgently needed. I urge all members of the UN Security Council to assume their responsibilities in relation to the situation in Syria, and adopt steps long overdue in order to bring an end to the repression in Syria.
