



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**



Brussels, 13 September 2012
EUCO 165/12
PRESSE 376
PR PCE 140

**Press statement by the President of the European Council
Herman Van Rompuy, following his meeting with the
President of Egypt Mohamed Morsi**

It is with great pleasure that I welcome President Morsi on his first visit to Brussels, also the first ever of an Egyptian President to the European Union. And I welcome him especially as Egypt's first democratically elected President. This is also his first visit to Europe. Therefore a lot of first(s)!

I believe that this is a true reflection of the importance of the relations between the European Union and Egypt, founded on common history and culture.

The European Union has expressed its intention to work closely with Egypt. I conveyed this message when congratulating the President upon his election last June. Today we both had the chance to reaffirm this common goal! Furthermore, President Morsi invited me to visit his country, invitation that I receive and accept with pleasure.

President Morsi informed me of the way forward in Egypt's democratic transition: the work of the Constituent Assembly in drafting a new Constitution to be confirmed by a public referendum, and the subsequent parliamentary elections. I welcomed this road map which should achieve the democratic representation of all Egyptians, irrespective of gender and creed, the safeguarding of their fundamental and human rights and the establishment of democratic institutions and balance of powers.

The EU and Egypt have strong economic and commercial ties. The EU is the first economic partner and the first source of foreign direct investment in Egypt. Today we also discussed bilateral cooperation and how to support the economic transition and to promote growth and job creation in Egypt. The EU has committed 450 million euro over 2011 - 2013, and it is ready to provide further financial assistance upon the conclusion of Egyptian negotiation with the IMF. The joint EU Egypt Task Force - to be held in November - should be able to foster further our economic cooperation.

P R E S S

Dirk De Backer - Spokesperson of the President - ☎ +32 (0)2 281 9768 - +32 (0)497 59 99 19
Preben Aamann - Deputy Spokesperson of the President - ☎ +32 (0)2 281 2060 - +32 (0)476 85 05 43
press.president@consilium.europa.eu www.european-council.europa.eu

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I explained, developments in the EU and in particular, the important steps taken in confronting the financial crisis.

The "Arab Spring" has brought momentous change. Egypt is a key country in a region which is so close to and important for Europe. Egypt's success will have positive repercussions on the region as a whole. In this context we discussed recent developments. On Syria, President Morsi and I agreed that the massacre has to stop, that oppression should end and that regional stability should be preserved. The appointment of the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and Arab League, Mr Brahimi, is very welcome. We also agreed that the international community should provide him with strong support and co-ordinate all efforts to end the atrocities and find a peaceful lasting solution. We further exchanged views on Iran and on peace in the Middle East.

Finally, I expressed shock and strongest condemnation for the killing of US officials, including US Ambassador Christopher Stevens in Benghazi yesterday. I have conveyed to President Obama my deepest sorrow and solidarity and asked him to transmit my heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. The EU has urged the Libyan authorities to ensure that those responsible for these killings are brought to justice.

Attacks such as these cannot be justified, regardless of their motivations, whenever and by whomever committed. All leaders have to assume their responsibility in building understanding and tolerance. I am very worried by the security situation of diplomatic missions in the region.

Egypt is facing the challenge of building a better and democratic future for its people, of responding to the calls that placed Tahrir Square at the centre of world attention. This is the responsibility President Morsi is faced with and I want to wish him and all the Egyptian people the greatest success. In this historic endeavour the EU will stand by their side as a friend, a neighbour, a partner.