

**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU on the situation of Human Rights
Defenders in Syria**

Date: 2007-12-31

The EU is deeply concerned about the recent detention of members of a pro-democracy grouping in support of the "Declaration of Damascus", in Syria.

The EU recalls Syria's international commitments, namely the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and more specifically the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Syria has signed and ratified and that clearly states the right to freedom of expression (article 19) and the right to freedom of assembly (article 21).

The EU also fears for their safety and physical integrity and calls upon the Syrian authorities to comply with article 10 from the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which states that " 1. All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person".

The EU urges the Syrian authorities to immediately release all of those detained while freely and peacefully expressing their opinions and to ensure that all Human Rights Defenders in Syria are able to operate free of all restrictions and harassment.