



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

**MEMO**

Brussels, 15 May 2013

**Joint Statement by HR/VP Catherine Ashton and EU Commissioner Maria Damanaki regarding Arctic Council decision on EU's observer status**

Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and EU Commissioner for maritime affairs and fisheries, Maria Damanaki made today the following statement:

"The EU welcomes the Arctic Council's decision on the EU's application for permanent observership.

The EU considers the Arctic Council a primary international forum for Arctic cooperation and looks forward to stepping up its engagement with the Arctic partners in tackling the challenges faced by this region of increasing importance.

Further to previous exchanges with the Canadian authorities the EU will now work expeditiously with them to address the outstanding issue of their concern."