



EUROPEAN UNION

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Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton at the end of her visit to Egypt

I am happy to be in Egypt today where I met with Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, Finance Minister, opposition parties, civil society, youth and the Secretary General of Arab League.

I salute the courage of Egyptian people in their peaceful and dignified mobilisation to bring democracy and improve opportunities in their country.

During my meetings I encouraged the transitional authorities to implement their commitments to lift the state of emergency and expect the immediate release of all political prisoners.

I encouraged the transitional authorities to set a clear timetable and steps for constitutional reform, paving the way for free and fair parliamentary and presidential elections.

I urged the Egyptian authorities to take further steps towards a broad based and inclusive dialogue and expect all parties to take a constructive approach.

The EU stands ready to accompany the peaceful and orderly transition to a civilian and democratic government and to support Egyptian efforts to improve their economic situation and increase social cohesion.

Authorities are today holding discussions with opposition and civil society interlocutors to understand better the situation on the ground, to see the state of development of the national political dialogue, to listen to the messages and eventual requests for support to the transition process of my interlocutors.

The EU and international actors must coordinate strategy on how best to assist transition in Egypt and Tunisia.

We will not dictate outcomes or impose solutions. Everybody agrees we need to avoid overlap and overload. We need shared assessment and maximized collective impact. We must act in coordinated way. Experts and officials will meet in Brussels tomorrow to discuss this.

The EU is committed to offer a new partnership providing more effective support to those countries in the Southern Neighbourhood pursuing political and economic reforms.

I have listened attentively to Egyptian requests and the EU is ready to review, adapt and mobilise appropriate support.

P R E S S

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It is important to fully respect local ownership of the reform and socio economic development process. We are only here to support you if you request so.

The objective is to develop a package of measures which will be comprehensive across all fields of EU engagement with a view to lending more effective support reflecting partners' commitment to reform building on the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Union for the Mediterranean.

Looking at wider region my message is clear:

- I deplore the loss of life, condemn all acts of violence and call on all sides to exercise restraint;
- I call for full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- I call for authorities to listen to the aspirations and demands from the people and engage without delay in national political dialogue which should be inclusive and comprehensive;
- The EU stands ready to lend support to accompany reform efforts of partner countries. Support will respond to partners request and will respect fully local ownership.

Regarding specific action on Libya, we are looking forward to the meeting of UN Security Council. It will address the situation in Libya later today and will discuss all options, including restrictive measures. For my part, I have called a meeting of EU Ambassadors to look at what the European Union can do to support the UN and what measures it can take.

As the situation stands, we have suspended negotiations on EU-Libya Framework Agreement. We are coordinating closely with Member States in Brussels, in New York and in Geneva at the UN Human Rights Council, where I will be myself on Monday.
