



EUROPEAN UNION

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**Joint statement by Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and Commissioner Štefan Füle, on the Constituent Assembly Elections in the Republic of Tunisia**

*"We have taken good note of the preliminary results of the elections announced by Mr. K. Jendoubi, Chairman of the Independent High Commission for the Elections.*

*We commend the candidates and parties that took part in the democratic process. We also congratulate the Ennahda party which obtained the highest percentage of votes. The EU looks forward to working closely with the new Constituent Assembly and the Tunisian authorities and institutions in responding to the Tunisian people's demands for democracy, freedom, social justice and dignity.*

*We thank the Election Observation Mission (EOM) led by Michael Gahler for its work and contribution to this process. We underline the words of Chief Observer Michael Gahler who said that the elections in Tunisia were an 'encouraging first step to democracy', and that they were generally well-conducted, underpinned by a strong political consensus, accompanied by extensive freedom of expression and organized in a transparent manner.*

*For the first time Tunisian citizens have had the opportunity to choose in a free and democratic manner their representatives and determine their own future. The newly elected Constituent Assembly will now have the key task of writing the new Constitution of the country. It will need to work in a spirit of consensus in order to build a new democratic State.*

*It is also important to recall the work of the transition authorities which have led Tunisia through a crucial and difficult period of its history, in particular the interim government led by Prime Minister Essebsi and the members of the High Authority for the Realisation of the Objectives of the Revolution and Political Reforms and of the Independent High Commission for the Elections (ISIE).*

**P R E S S**

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*The EU remains fully committed to continue its political and financial support for the Tunisian society. In this regard the meeting of the Tunisia-EU Task Force last September showed Europe's strong support for Tunisia.*

*Finally, we regret the violent clashes that occurred after the announcement of the preliminary results of the elections and urge calm and restraint."*

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