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## **Declaration on behalf of the European Union on the presidential elections in Egypt**

The holding of the presidential elections marks an important step in the implementation of the constitutional roadmap towards the transition to democracy in Egypt. The European Union expresses its willingness to work closely with the new authorities in Egypt in a constructive partnership with a view to strengthening our bilateral relations.

The EU congratulates Abdel Fattah El-Sissi, as the new President of Egypt, and trusts that he will tackle the serious challenges faced by the country and the new government, among them the dire economic situation, the deep divisions within society, the security situation, and the respect of the human rights of all Egyptian citizens in line with international obligations and guaranteed by the new Constitution adopted last January.

On the basis of the preliminary statement of the EU Election Observation Mission the EU takes good note of the overall peaceful and orderly conduct of the elections. The EU also notes, as stated by the Mission, that while the new Constitution sets out a wide-ranging catalogue of fundamental rights, the respect for rights falls short of constitutional principles. Freedoms of association, assembly and expression are areas of concern, including in the context of this election.

Building a deep and sustainable democracy will only succeed with the establishment of democratic, transparent and accountable institutions that protect all citizens and their fundamental rights. In this context the EU reiterates its deep concern with the continued detention of members of peaceful civil society, political opposition and activists. The EU also reiterates its call on the Egyptian authorities to allow journalists to operate freely; to ensure peaceful protest notably by amending the protest law, to launch independent and credible investigations into the violent events since 30 June 2013; to ensure the defendant's rights to a fair and timely trial based on clear charges; to ensure humane prison conditions in line with international law and standards; to review the numerous death sentences imposed on political opponents in mass trials and to respect due process.

# **P R E S S**

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The EU hopes that the period ahead, particularly with parliamentary elections in view, will be marked by a spirit of dialogue aimed at reducing political division through reaching out to all major groups including civil society and permitting the political opposition that renounces violence and adheres to democratic principles, to act freely on the basis of the rights enshrined in the Constitution.

In this context, the EU stands ready to support efforts by the new President and his government to take the necessary steps in the transition and to address the difficult economic situation in the country in a sustainable manner through implementing the necessary socio-economic reforms. The EU is also ready to assist Egypt in capacity building in the field of improving good governance. The EU reiterates its willingness to work with Egypt as an important strategic partner in the region to address common challenges, while the country strives to meet the aspirations of the Egyptian people to live in a democratic, stable, secure and prosperous society.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia<sup>\*</sup>, Montenegro<sup>\*</sup>, Iceland<sup>†</sup> and Serbia<sup>\*</sup>, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this Declaration.

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<sup>\*</sup> The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

<sup>†</sup> Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and of the European Economic Area.