



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the conduct of the general election in Pakistan**

The European Union welcomes the elections held in Pakistan on 18 February. It congratulates the Pakistani people for their commitment to democratic development and their rejection of extremist forces. The elections provide a basis for a new democratic development in Pakistan.

The EU hopes to see swift moves towards the formation of a stable and functional Government which can start addressing core issues for Pakistan's future such as strengthening the democratic system, reestablishment of an independent judiciary, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and issues related to regional peace and stability.

The EU deeply regrets that not all political detainees including judges and lawyers were released and thus prevented from taking part in the electoral process. The EU renews its call for their immediate release. It also reiterates the need for freedom of the media.

P R E S S

The European Union is reiterating its commitment to the people of Pakistan in helping them build a prosperous and stable society, based on the principle of democracy and the rule of law. The successful deployment of a comprehensive EU Election Observation Mission during the elections is ample evidence of this continuing engagement.

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

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
