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Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the elections to the People's Assembly of Egypt

Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, made today the following statement:

"I have followed with close interest the elections to the People's Assembly of Egypt which took place on 28 November and 5 December. The European Union supports free and fair parliamentary elections, recognizing the responsibility of the Egyptian people to choose their own future and to build a stable democratic system. The European Union believes that in every country an open electoral process is the key to a strong nation and society.

Ahead of these elections we took positive note of the measures of the Government and the Higher Electoral Commission to increase transparency in the election process including local election observation. Unfortunately the implementation of these measures was insufficient. I was concerned by reports of irregularities, restricted access for independent observers and candidates' representatives into polling stations, media restrictions as well as arrests of opposition activists. A significant segment of the opposition withdrew after the first round of the elections. I particularly regret the incidents of violence, some of them resulting in loss of life.

I encourage the Egyptian authorities to respond to these concerns. The EU will continue to call on the Egyptian government to permit domestic and international monitors to observe future elections, and remains ready to offer assistance in that regard.

Egypt is a key partner of the EU and we remain committed to continue working together, building on the reforms already undertaken and on the programme set out in the EU/Egypt Action Plan."

P R E S S

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

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