



EUROPEAN UNION

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Statement by the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on Tunisia

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

"I spoke earlier today with the newly appointed Tunisian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ahmed Ounaies.

I congratulated the Minister on his appointment and confirmed the EU's solidarity with the Tunisian people in their efforts to build a stable and pluralistic democracy with full respect for the rule of law and fundamental rights and freedoms. I expressed the EU's hope that the transitional Government will be able to organize free and fair democratic parliamentary and presidential elections as soon as possible. I welcomed the liberation of political prisoners and I stressed that freedom of association and legalization of all political parties are key components for the transition.

I confirmed the EU's readiness to provide its assistance and expertise for the preparation and organization of the electoral process and political reforms. I underscored the need to help and empower the civil society. The EU will review and update its strategy and assistance. I also emphasised the EU's commitment to continue our economic cooperation and the need for investors to redouble their confidence in Tunisia.

Minister Ounaies and I agreed to meet in the coming days.

The Tunisian Foreign Minister welcomed the EU's engagement and the offer to accompany his country's transition towards democracy with assistance."

P R E S S

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