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**Declaration by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton,  
on behalf of the European Union  
on the review of EU-Zimbabwe relations**

The European Union has reviewed its relations with Zimbabwe and has today taken a further step towards normalisation of those relations. This reflects not only the progress that has been made but also the challenges that remain. The EU has taken these steps to support the Zimbabwean people to achieve a more prosperous and democratic future.

The EU has decided today to suspend the remaining restrictive measures with the exception of the arms embargo and those targeting two individuals – the Head of State and his spouse and one entity – Zimbabwe Defence Industries. The EU reiterates its position that these Measures do not have any direct economic or social impact on the Zimbabwean people, and should not be blamed for the wider socio-economic challenges facing the country.

The EU has welcomed the generally peaceful manner in which the 2013 elections were conducted. However, we remain seriously concerned about the significant weaknesses identified in the electoral process and the lack of transparency identified by the SADC, AU and domestic observations missions, which calls into doubt the credibility of the elections. The EU believes that significant improvements in the electoral process are required along the lines proposed by international and domestic observers, if future elections are to be both credible and transparent. In particular, the EU would like to see the Zimbabwean authorities make progress on implementing the recommendations of the African Union Observer Mission concerning the verification of the voter's roll and the liberalization of the media, and completing outstanding reforms, including those related to the security sectors.

**P R E S S**

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As a clear indication of the EU's commitment to assist the people of Zimbabwe, the EU agreed to maintain the suspension of appropriate measures under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement. Provided there is no serious deterioration in the governance and human rights situation, the EU has agreed that appropriate measures will expire on 1 November 2014. This enables the EU to continue engaging with the Zimbabwean authorities and to make further progress on the programming of the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) National Indicative Programme (2014-2020) and to submit it to the EDF Committee. In line with normal practice, the formulation of the NIP under the 11th EDF will be guided by the essential and fundamental principles of the Cotonou Treaty and focus on supporting democratic reforms contained in the new Constitution, as well as on achieving economic reforms and equitable growth to further improve the life of ordinary Zimbabweans.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, Montenegro\*, and Iceland+, 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 the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this declaration.

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

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

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