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Declaration by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on behalf of the European Union with regard to the successful Constitutional referendum in Zimbabwe and the review of EU restrictive measures

The EU congratulates the people of Zimbabwe on a peaceful, successful and credible vote to approve a new constitution on 16 March 2013. This represents a significant step in the implementation of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) which remains key to achieving a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic Zimbabwe.

The EU reiterates its support to the efforts of the political parties, the South African Facilitation Team and SADC, and encourages them to build on the momentum to complete the implementation of the GPA and the SADC Roadmap, paving the way for peaceful, transparent and credible elections in which the people of Zimbabwe will be free to elect the Government of their choice.

Recognising the importance of the referendum and the adoption of a new constitution as a major step along this road the EU, in line with its commitment to suspend a majority of remaining restrictive measures, has today agreed to immediately suspend the application of measures against 81 individuals and 8 entities.

The EU welcomes and supports the repeated calls for national reconciliation and peaceful political activity made by political leaders, including the President and the Prime Minister, and acknowledges the commitment by all parties to a peaceful, transparent and credible electoral process. It is nevertheless concerned over the recent reports of intimidation and harassment against some political activists and civil society representatives. The EU urges all leaders to ensure that their commitment to peace and transparency are respected by all groups and services of the security authorities at both national and local levels. A number of key decision makers will remain subject to restrictive measures until peaceful, transparent and credible elections have been achieved.

P R E S S

Effective observation of the elections by domestic and international observers will significantly enhance the transparency of the electoral process and the credibility for all voters and participants. In this regard we welcome the commitment by SADC to deploy a robust observation mission. The EU stands ready to provide any support that is requested.

The EU reiterates its commitment to work with whatever Government is formed as the result of a peaceful, transparent and credible electoral process, and looks forward to continue strengthening our partnership to encourage growth and stability, and to build prosperity for all Zimbabweans.

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

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