Statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton on the Day of Liberation of Libya

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

"The announcement today of the Day of Liberation by Chairman Abdel-Jalil is an historic event. After more than 40 years of despotism, after nine months of bitter and bloody fighting the Libyan people can now look to the future with hope and confidence.

Now is the time for the Libyan leadership to unite during this transition period to build a new Libya based on national reconciliation and respect for human rights, the rule of law and democratic principles. There can be no greater tribute to the suffering of the Libyan people than this, no finer memorial to Gaddafi’s victims.

The European Union has been present throughout the crisis. We provided substantial humanitarian assistance including support for those who had to flee their homes and the country, food and medical assistance. In March we said that Gaddafi had lost legitimacy and had to go. We established presences in Benghazi and Tripoli once they were liberated. We have provided assistance to civil society including women and youth – key drivers of the revolution.

We are now working with international partners on support for Libya in the post-conflict phase. The European Union will continue to support the people of Libya during this historic transition process."

PR E S S

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