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JOINT STATEMENT

by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton
and Commissioner Stefan Füle on the Egyptian NGO trial verdicts

The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Commissioner Stefan Füle made today the following statement:

"We wish to express our concern at the recent Court ruling in Egypt sentencing the 43 employees of foreign NGOs referred to trial in December 2011 to between one and five years in jail. This verdict conveys a negative signal regarding the work of civil society. We will continue to follow closely the judicial process in this case.

Civil society has a crucial role to play in Egypt's on-going democratic transition. It must be allowed to operate freely. The EU has been working actively with Egyptian civil society and has developed several highly successful projects which promote universal human rights. We reiterate the EU's commitment to working closely with all stakeholders to ensure that an NGO law, fully in line with international standards and Egypt's commitments under international human rights law, is adopted."

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