STATEMENT

by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the action by the Maldivian Police to halt the presidential elections on 19 October 2013

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

"I was deeply concerned that the presidential election in the Maldives has again been prevented from taking place and that the work of the Election Commission had to be halted following the intervention of the police.

If the democratic process is to be brought back on track, a new date must be set without delay so that the Maldivian people can freely choose a new President by 11 November, in conformity with the constitution.

The EU reiterates its confidence in the impartiality and efficiency of the Maldivian Election Commission. It recalls that elections cannot successfully be held if the process can be repeatedly brought to a halt through legal injunctions. The forces of law and order must facilitate the democratic process.

Failure to hold credible elections would be to deny the Maldivian people their democratic rights. Further instability would also damage the country's economy and its relations with its international partners."

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