STATEMENT

by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on violence and reported deaths of protesters in Kyiv

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

"I strongly condemn the violent escalation of events in Kyiv overnight leading to casualties. The reported deaths of several protesters is a source of extreme worry and my sympathy goes to all those affected.

I call on everyone involved to ensure restraint. The use of force and resort to violence is not an answer to the political crisis. All acts of violence must come to an immediate end and be swiftly investigated. Those responsible will have to be held to account.

Ukrainian citizens' rights of assembly, freedom of expression and media must be fully respected and protected. I am deeply concerned about attacks on journalists and about reports of missing persons.

I call on the government and the opposition to engage in a genuine dialogue at the highest level. The solution needs to meet the aspirations of the Ukrainian people”