Statement by the spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the situation in Côte d’Ivoire

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

"The first measures taken by the EU against 19 Ivorians entered into force today at 12h00. The EU recalls that the result of the presidential election, in favour of President Alassane Ouattara, can neither be submitted to any form of evaluation, nor be questioned. On the contrary, it is important that transfer of power takes place without delay and without preconditions. The only possible dialogue is one that allows for respect of election results and effective hand over of power. The EU commends the unambiguous declarations made by the Secretary General of the United Nations and aligns itself with the international consensus they represent. The EU also commends the call for a special session of the Human Rights Council and for an extraordinary ECOWAS summit.

The High Representative is extremely concerned about the degradation of the human rights situation in Côte d'Ivoire, in particular the increasing reports about violence against civilians, extra-judicial killings, enforced disappearances and violations of the rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression. The EU warns those who violate human rights or attack the UNOCI, and those who incite such actions. The EU calls for an immediate stop of this violence and underlines the need for protection of civil populations and human rights defenders. It stresses the need for crimes not to remain unpunished.

The EU insists on a lift of the siege of the Hôtel du Golf so that President Ouattara and the members of his government can exercise their freedom of movement, including access to official buildings and to Ivorian National Broadcasting. Generally, the freedom of movement should be respected."

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