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Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton and European Commissioner for Enlargement Štefan Füle on the situation in Tunisia

Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, and Commissioner for enlargement Štefan Füle made today the following statement:

"We are concerned about the events that have been taking place in Tunisia in recent days. In particular, we deplore the violence and the death of civilians. We express our sympathy to the families of the victims.

We call for restraint in the use of force and for the respect of fundamental freedoms. In particular, we call for the immediate release from detention of bloggers, journalists, lawyers and other detained people who peacefully demonstrated in Tunisia. We also call on Tunisian authorities to investigate the recent events and provide further information about them, and on all parties to engage in dialogue with a view to finding solutions to the problems raised by demonstrators.

The EU has a strong dialogue and broad cooperation with Tunisia and is engaged in a process of strengthening bilateral relations on a wide range of issues. This process of strengthening relations will require increased commitments from both partners on all issues, in particular in the areas of human rights and fundamental freedoms. We hope that our Tunisian partner will meet the ambitions and expectations placed in our relationship."

P R E S S

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