Joint statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton and European Commission Vice-President Viviane Reding on the International Day against Female Genital Mutilation

6 February marks the International Day against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). This is an opportunity to remind the world that the European Union condemns this abhorrent practice that severely violates the human rights and dignity of hundreds of thousands women and girls. Today, we reaffirm our commitment to work toward the eradication of this exceptionally brutal crime.

Female genital mutilation violates women’s and girls’ rights to equal opportunities, health, freedom from violence, injury, abuse, torture and cruel or inhuman and degrading treatment. We believe that it is our duty to protect girls and women from the risk of mutilation and to alleviate the pain of women who live with the horrific physical and mental scars from female genital mutilation.

We need to promote measures that will lead to the eradication of FGM. We have to focus on protecting and caring for the young girls and women who are victims of FGM. We will continue fighting gender-based violence in the EU and in our external relations.