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Statement by the spokesperson of
the High Representative, Catherine Ashton,
on the political dialogue in Albania

Following the talks in Tirana on 26 January, 3 February and 22 March 2011 between the EEAS Managing Director Miroslav Lajčak and the President, the Prime Minister and the leader of the opposition in Albania, the High Representative welcomes the meetings yesterday and today in Tirana between the representatives of the Democratic Party and Socialist Party. The absence of such direct political contacts has been a source of great concern and lack of progress of Albania.

The European Union has stressed, more than once, the importance of ensuring free, fair and democratic municipal elections in Albania in line with domestic and international standards. Getting these elections right is essential for Albania's track record in relation to its EU aspirations and it is imperative in order to obtain the confidence of the electorate. The political leaders are responsible for the good conduct of electoral campaign and elections.

Building on these meetings the High Representative calls upon the governing majority and the opposition to continue and further intensify their dialogue, in as well as outside Parliament, with a view to securing the best possible preparations of this municipal elections and the progress of Albania that its citizens deserve.

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