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Statement by the spokesperson of High Representative Catherine Ashton on the draft constitutional law related to presidential elections in Senegal

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 High Representative is following closely the electoral process in Senegal and in particular the draft constitutional law adopted in the Council of Ministers on 16th June, 2011. This text is due to be discussed in emergency procedure by the Parliament. This draft law includes provisions that could exclude a second round if the leading candidate secures 25% of the votes.

The High Representative notes with concern that such an amendment to the Constitution would lead, at very short notice, to a major change in the provisions for the presidential elections, only eight months before the holding of the ballot, planned for 26th February, 2012. It would also create the risk of the legitimacy of that election result being challenged.

The European Union is concerned that constitutional provisions that govern the presidential elections should be defined in the spirit of national consensus that always prevailed in Senegal, so as to ensure free and transparent elections that express the will of the voters and ensure uncontested democratic legitimacy for the President. The EU calls on the Senegalese authorities to maintain this consensual approach.

The EU will continue to support the electoral process and a peaceful dialogue between Senegalese from all parties and coalitions."

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