Statement by the High Representative Catherine Ashton on the elections in Nicaragua on 6 November 2011

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

“I welcome the high level of participation in the 6th November presidential, legislative and Central American Parliament (PARLACEN) elections in Nicaragua and I commend Nicaraguan civil society for its strong commitment to democratic elections.

I deplore, however, the violent clashes and loss of life that occurred after the elections and I call on all the parties to express and resolve any disagreement through peaceful means.

I was pleased to respond positively to the invitation from Nicaragua for the European Union to observe, for the fourth time, the general elections in the country and I welcome the preliminary findings of the EU Election Observation Mission.

I regret, however, that significant groups of domestic observers were not accredited ahead of the elections. This was a missed an opportunity to enhance further the transparency of the process.

I take note of the results announced by the Nicaraguan electoral authorities, giving President Daniel Ortega victory in the Presidential election. I encourage the Supreme Electoral Council to ensure the highest level of transparency in the rest of the process”.

The High Representative thanked the Chief Observer of the EU Election Observation Mission in Nicaragua, Mr Luis Yáñez-Barnuevo MEP, as well as his entire team of over 80 observers from 25 of the EU Member States, as well as Norway, Switzerland and Canada, for the important work they have undertaken. The presence of a special election observation delegation from the European Parliament was particularly welcome. The mission will issue its final report on the elections shortly including recommendations for the future.

The European Union remains committed to helping strengthen democratic institutions in Nicaragua.