Statement by the EU High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on the first anniversary of the Declaration of Liberation in Libya on 23 October 2012

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

“I would like to congratulate the people of Libya on the first anniversary of the historic Declaration of Liberation. The Libyan revolution was the work of ordinary Libyan men and women, who fought for justice, dignity and freedom. Over the last year a huge amount has been achieved. A society that for 42 years was deprived of democratic choice or basic freedoms has embraced the new opportunities through public debate and peaceful national elections.

However, the transition process to a democratic society has only just begun and the challenges ahead are huge. In the spirit of the revolution, it is now important to promote reconciliation and respect for human rights across Libyan society, while ensuring justice and due process. Security needs to be restored, and this requires disarmament and the reintegration of militia. A vibrant media and civil society need to be nurtured giving a voice to all, especially to women and young people. In this context, I am concerned about violence taking place in Bani Walid and I call upon all parties to seek a mediated solution and to respect international humanitarian principles. The path to democracy will be a long-term process. The EU remains committed to supporting the Libyan people in this endeavour.”