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Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the elections in Pakistan

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission issued the following statement today, following the elections in Pakistan on 11 May 2013:

"I wish to congratulate the people of Pakistan. The 2013 general election marks a historic victory for the democratic life of their country. Despite an extremely difficult security environment and threats from extremists, voters turned out in unprecedented numbers with many Pakistani citizens voting for the first time. All the main stakeholders, in particular the political parties and state institutions, acted in a responsible manner, demonstrating their support for democracy and the holding of the elections.

I welcome the progress made by the Pakistani authorities in their efforts to hold these elections in line with national and international commitments, notably through new constitutional provisions for the Election Commission of Pakistan and the caretaker government, as well as a significantly improved electoral roll.

I have taken note of the statement of preliminary findings and conclusions of the EU Election Observation Mission on the conduct of elections, including the need for continued improvement in the electoral process, in particular the consolidation and strengthening of the electoral framework. There is also a need for a further increase in the level of women’s participation in the overall political system.

The EU is a close partner to Pakistan. I look forward to continue our strong partnership in support of Pakistan's democratic, economic and social development.

I commend the valuable contributions made by civil society domestic observers as well as international observers, in particular the independent EU Election Observation Mission headed by Mr Michael Gahler MEP."

[Signature]

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:
Michael Mann +32 498 999 780 - +32 2 584 9780- Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu
Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu
Sebastien Brabant +32 460 75 09 98 - Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu
Eamonn Prendergast +32 460 75 32 93 – Eamonn.Prendergast@ec.europa.eu
Follow us on Twitter@eu_eeas
www.eeas.europa.eu