Statement by the Spokesperson of High Representative Catherine Ashton on the new NGO law in Egypt

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

"The EU High Representative wishes to reiterate the EU's firm commitment to supporting civil society in Egypt, which has a crucial role to play in the ongoing transition towards democracy.

The EU in a spirit of true partnership has engaged with the government and has provided technical advice to the authorities in the process of drafting a new law on associations, the NGO Law. The High Representative salutes this readiness to engage and the resulting improvements in the draft just submitted to the Shoura Council.

However, the High Representative fears that the draft law still contains elements that can unnecessarily constrain the work of NGOs in Egypt and hinder our capacity as a foreign donor to support their work. The draft law has to be in line with international standards and obligations of Egypt.

The EU remains fully committed to working closely with all stakeholders to ensure that an NGO law, fully in line with best regional and international practice is adopted in Egypt."