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

“I am following closely developments in Egypt and am fully aware of the deep divisions in society, popular demands for political change and efforts at brokering a compromise.

I urge all sides to rapidly return to the democratic process, including the holding of free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections and the approval of a constitution, to be done in a fully inclusive manner, so as to permit the country to resume and complete its democratic transition.

I hope that the new administration will be fully inclusive and reiterate the importance of ensuring full respect for fundamental rights, freedoms, and the rule of law and will hold the authorities to account for this.

I strongly condemn all violent acts, offer my condolences to the families of the victims, and urge the security forces to do everything in their power to protect the lives and well-being of Egyptian citizens. I call on all sides to exercise maximum restraint.

The European Union remains unequivocally committed to supporting the Egyptian people in their aspirations to democracy and inclusive governance.”