Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on arrival at the extraordinary meeting of Foreign Affairs Council on Egypt

Good morning. Can I say first of all that I am extremely pleased that so many Ministers have responded and have come together at this Foreign Affairs Council where our discussions will be focused on Egypt.

I want to say from the beginning that we've always supported the democratic aspirations of the people of Egypt. We stand with the Egyptian people. Egypt is a crucial partner country, our relationships with the people of Egypt matter enormously to us.

We are extremely worried and concerned about the level of violence. We have condemned violence, we condemn acts of terrorism.

We are coming together today to have a political conversation about how the European Union responds and how we continue, as I've said, in our desire to support the people of Egypt.

I hope that in the course of the next few hours, Ministers will be able to join with me in thinking through the steps that we take as we go forward, with very much that political discussion in mind and very much that continuation of support for the people of Egypt.

What the ambassadors have been discussing at the Political and Security Committee on Monday, and the COREPER now and then of course the Ministers is about saying how best do we address this; what are the things that Europe can do.
We remain committed to the people of Egypt, committed especially to the poorest in their society, to the groups that we've been supporting for many years: human rights, civil society, and so on. But it's very important that there is a political roadmap. We've been in discussion with the authorities in Egypt on this and with others, about how to get the political roadmap not only on the table but actually into action, because we need an inclusive process that brings all Egyptians into democracy, and into the future that we know that they want.

And I've been talking with a number of other countries and with the Arab League about how to support Egypt through and into a peaceful and secure democracy and that's the greatest way in which we can help and support.

Thank you.