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## STATEMENT

### **by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton regarding the death of Chinese Human Rights defender, Ms Cao Shunli**

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

*"I am deeply saddened by the death of Ms Cao Shunli. She had campaigned peacefully for the full participation of independent civil society organisations in the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process and was due to travel to Geneva when she disappeared, and was subsequently arrested and put in detention, although never indicted. As her health seriously deteriorated, she was finally transferred to a military hospital where she died on 14 March 2014.*

*The EU would like to pay tribute to Ms Cao Shunli's engagement and recall the EU's attachment to the full participation of independent civil society organisations in the Universal Periodic Review process.*

*The EU also reaffirms its call on China to implement the announcements made at the Third Plenum of the Central Committee of the 18th Chinese Communist Party, as well as the pledges before the Human Rights Council, by releasing all those imprisoned or detained for the peaceful expression of their views."*

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FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

Michael Mann +32 498 999 780 - +32 2 584 9780- [Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu](mailto:Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu) [@EUHighRepSpox](https://twitter.com/EUHighRepSpox)  
Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - [Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu) [@AshtonSpox](https://twitter.com/AshtonSpox) [Maja](https://twitter.com/Maja)  
Sebastien Brabant +32 460 75 09 98 - [Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu)  
Eamonn Prendergast +32 460 75 32 93 - [Eamonn.Prendergast@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Eamonn.Prendergast@ec.europa.eu)

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