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STATEMENT

by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the constitutional referendum in Egypt

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 have followed closely the constitutional referendum in Egypt on 14 and 15 January 2014, including through an EU Expert Electoral Mission. I would like to congratulate the Egyptian people and the authorities responsible for organizing the vote in a largely orderly manner.

While the EU is not in a position to make a thorough assessment of the conduct of the referendum or verify alleged irregularities, these do not appear to have fundamentally affected the outcome. I do however strongly regret the violent clashes related to the referendum leading to deaths and injuries on all sides in protests. I extend my sincere condolences to the families of the victims.

I take note of the level of participation, that may be the result of events ahead of the referendum which the authorities will have to look into more closely for the process ahead. I also note that there is an ample majority of votes in favour, which constitutes a clear endorsement of the draft constitution.

I welcome the fact that the new constitution enshrines fundamental rights and freedoms, including freedom of expression, assembly and women's rights. All existing and future legislation will have to be in compliance with the new constitution. I also expect that the constitution will be applied in a way that gives full effect to civilian preeminence.

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I trust the authorities will move forward with the constitutional roadmap and organise elections as quickly as possible, leading to a fair representation of different political views in the future parliament, accountability for the government and state institutions, and greater security and prosperity for all Egyptians.

I wish to once more reiterate that the EU will continue supporting the Egyptian people as they strive to complete their democratic transition and fulfil the aspirations of the 2011 revolution."
