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Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on Egypt following the speech of President Mubarak

Catherine Ashton, the EU High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, made today the following statement:

“The demands and expectations of the Egyptian people must be met. It is for them to judge whether the steps announced by President Mubarak fulfil their expectations and aspirations. President Mubarak has not yet opened the way to faster and deeper reforms. We will pay close attention to the response by the Egyptian people in the coming hours and days.

The EU salutes the courage of the Egyptian people who have pursued their campaign for democratic change peacefully and with dignity. Violence can never be accepted. As I have always said, peaceful but real and lasting transformation delivering deep democracy is what is now required. Full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is essential. All abuses must be investigated. I urge the Egyptian authorities and the army to protect the peaceful demonstrators and act with calm and restraint.

An orderly and irreversible transition towards democracy and free and fair elections is the shared objective of both the EU and the Egyptian people. The lifting of the state of emergency is a step forward and must be implemented as soon as possible.

The future of Egypt lies firmly in the hands of the Egyptian people. The EU stands ready to help in any way it can. I will visit Egypt as soon as possible.

I will continue to engage with the Egyptian authorities to convey the need for an orderly, meaningful and lasting democratic transition. The time for change is now.”

P R E S S

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