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## S T A T E M E N T

### **by the Spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the elections in the Republic of Tajikistan**

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

*"The High Representative has followed closely the presidential elections in the Republic of Tajikistan, notably the pre-electoral phase and the level of engagement of opposition parties in it.*

*The EU has repeatedly called on Tajikistan for free, democratic, inclusive and transparent elections and has emphasised the importance of the freedom of media and freedom of speech.*

*The High Representative takes note of the preliminary findings and conclusions of the OSCE / ODIHR International Election Observation Mission that the presidential elections took place peacefully, but restrictive candidate registration requirements resulted in lack of genuine choice and meaningful pluralism.*

*The High Representative regrets that previous recommendations by ODIHR issued after parliamentary elections in 2010 were not implemented by the Tajik authorities and renews her call for these recommendations to be fully implemented.*

*The High Representative calls on the Tajik authorities to effectively address the restrictions and irregularities mentioned in the OSCE/ ODIHR preliminary statement. The EU stands ready*

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  
Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - [Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu) @AshtonSpox 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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*to assist Tajikistan in its efforts to bring the election process into line with OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections."*

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