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Statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton on the presidential elections in Yemen

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

The presidential election yesterday marked an important milestone in Yemen's transition. This was a vote to open a new chapter in the country's history – a chapter offering the promise of long-awaited change for the people of Yemen. I am very pleased that under such exceptional conditions so many Yemenis cast their vote to show their back for a peaceful transfer of power and transition process.

Attempts, notably in Aden and the Southern Governorates, to disrupt the election with violence will not be allowed to derail a transition which now has a new injection of momentum. Those responsible for such violence must be held to account.

Positive and lasting change will require President-elect Hadi and the national consensus government to continue to respond with great determination to the aspirations of the Yemeni people. It is the courage and perseverance of the Yemeni people that has brought the country to this pivotal moment. The national dialogue, reconciliation and constitutional reform process which must now begin should pave the way for a genuinely inclusive, democratic and civil state, which responds to the needs of all Yemenis.

Yemen faces huge challenges: humanitarian, economic, and security. It may be assured that the EU will continue to stand by Yemen in its efforts to build a better future, founded on democracy, justice and human rights. The EU has been a leading supporter of the transition process, and will continue to work with the government and all strands of Yemeni society, alongside regional and international partners, to help Yemen rebuild and reform its institutions and economy.

P R E S S

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