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STATEMENT

by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on her meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister of 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 just met with the Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister, Ziad Bahaa El-Deen, with whom I have discussed the political and economic situation in Egypt. The Deputy Prime Minister briefed me on the implementation of the political road map according to which a democratic and civil government should be in place by summer 2014. Among other things, I raised the worrying reports I have received on the security forces' violent dispersal and arrests during yesterday's protests against military trials. While I acknowledged that Egypt's stability and the population's need for a secure environment is important, I underlined that fundamental human rights have to be respected at all times. This is particularly relevant in the context of Egypt's ongoing Constitutional process which should result in a Constitution safeguarding the rights and obligations of all Egyptians.

We also discussed Egypt's economic situation. In line with the EU's commitment at the extraordinary Foreign Affairs Council on 21 August 2013, EU assistance to the socio-economic sector and to civil society will continue. Today, we have signed a Financing Agreement worth €90 million for Egypt. This assistance will enhance the access of children, especially girls, to education and will fight child labour in the poorest areas of Egypt. It will also help civil society groups to provide socio-economic assistance in the most deprived areas of Egypt, including support to community service delivery through Non-State Actors. Those most in need will also benefit from improvements in unplanned housing, which represents an estimated half of the built-up area in the Greater Cairo Region.

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I concluded the meeting by reiterating the EU's readiness to continue our support to the people of Egypt, in their quest for a democratic, stable and prosperous country for all Egyptians."
