



EUROPEAN UNION

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## **Statement by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton on the conduct, process and outcome of the general elections in Nigeria held during April 2011**

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

*"I congratulate the people of Nigeria on the holding of successful elections and for their determination to participate in the democratic life of their country. The National Assembly, Presidential, Governorship and State Houses of Assembly elections of 2011 represent a significant improvement on previous years and can be considered at this stage as the most credible elections since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999.*

*The European Union congratulates President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, the Governors and legislators on their election and wishes them well in ensuring an inclusive agenda based on accountability to the electorate, delivery of improved governance and the pursuit of economic and social development for the nation. The EU looks forward to working closely with the new government and legislature, and to continue partnering with Nigeria in support of good governance, democracy and social and economic growth.*

*The EU commends the leadership of INEC, and particularly its Chairman, as well as the role of the Nigerian Youth Service Corps and the security agencies in the elections. A number of irregularities and deficiencies were nevertheless observed during the elections, and I urge INEC to swiftly assess the electoral process in order to strengthen it further and to take adequate and transparent action against any electoral offenders.*

### **P R E S S**

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*The EU condemns all acts of violence surrounding the elections and the ensuing loss of life and displacement of people. The EU encourages the Nigerian authorities to take the necessary action to protect the rights of all citizens affected and to bring to justice the perpetrators of violence. Furthermore the EU calls on all stakeholders in the elections to respect democratic processes and to pursue any grievances peacefully and within the rule of law.*

*I commend the contributions of international and civil society domestic observers, particularly the independent EU Election Observation Mission, headed by Mr Alojz Peterle MEP. The EU EOM will remain in the field until the end of the process and will publish its findings and recommendations in several weeks' time."*

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