STATEMENT

by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton
on the First Round of Presidential Elections in Afghanistan

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 pay tribute to the courage and bravery of the Afghan people in their determination to have their rightful say in who will be their president. They have sent a clear message that votes – not violence – should decide who governs Afghanistan. I want to make special mention of the many women of Afghanistan who turned out to cast their ballot, in spite of the many barriers they face to their legitimate aspirations to play a full part in Afghanistan’s politics. I also want to credit the Afghan authorities and the Afghan National Security Forces for their considerable efforts in ensuring voter safety and in organising the elections on schedule.

The EU has shown its commitment to the process by deploying an observation team led by Thijs Berman MEP. The team will remain in Afghanistan until the election process is completed. I call on all parties to now let the electoral bodies perform their task of making sure that the final results reflect the will of the people as accurately as possible. "

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