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Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the Parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan

Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, made on 8 November the following statement:

"I take note of the preliminary findings and conclusions of the International Election Observation Mission stating that the parliamentary elections in the Republic of Azerbaijan were characterized by a peaceful atmosphere and that all opposition parties participated in the political process, but that the conduct of these elections overall was not sufficient to constitute meaningful progress in the democratic development of the country.

I call on the Azerbaijani authorities to address these shortcomings as well as the problematic issues identified by OSCE/ODHIR in the course of the electoral process.

I also encourage the Azerbaijani authorities to enhance their efforts to honour their international commitments regarding democratic principles and human rights, and in particular with regard to ensuring and strengthening democratic pluralism, media freedom, and freedom of assembly. Azerbaijan is a key partner

for the EU, and we stand ready to continue our support to the implementation of further political reforms, including in the framework of the Eastern Partnership."