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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the elections in Algeria**

The European Union has been closely following the presidential elections in Algeria. The election campaign raised considerable hope in Algeria and among its partners in the international community. By taking an active part in the election campaign, Algeria's citizens showed the store they set by a free, open, pluralist poll, as promised by the Algerian authorities.

The European Union has noted the decision by six of the seven candidates to withdraw from the election and the reasons given by them for their decision.

The European Union has supported and encouraged the democratisation process embarked upon in Algeria since November 1995. The Union believes that it is by promoting democracy and the rule of law and by continuing with economic and social reforms that Algeria will be able to emerge from the crisis in which it has been embroiled for a number of years. The European Union will attach the greatest importance to initiatives along these lines by the new President-elect, Mr Abdelaziz Bouteflika.

The European Union confirms its readiness to support the reform process in Algeria, particularly by way of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, and to continue the political dialogue entered into with the Algerian authorities.