

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Declaration by the Presidency**

The Presidency of the European Union notes with satisfaction the free and fair conduct of the first round of the Russian presidential elections. Voting indicates that the majority of Russian voters favour the continuation of the process of democratic reform in an atmosphere of order and social harmony. The Presidency of the European Union will watch the second round with the same interest, determined as it is to maintain and develop its partnership with the Russian Federation and its support for the reform process.

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