

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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

The European Union congratulates the Nicaraguan people and political parties on the democratic maturity which they demonstrated during the Presidential elections on 4 November, when turn-out was massive. Both the EU election monitoring mission and other international observers were of the opinion that, notwithstanding some minor problems, the elections were free and open. They were held in a climate of order and calm.

The European Union would congratulate His Excellency Mr Enrique Bolaños on his election as President of the Republic of Nicaragua and wish him every success in the extremely important task of leading his country.

The European Union appreciates Mr Daniel Ortega's acceptance of defeat and his stated intention of leading a critical but constructive opposition.

The European Union urges President Bolaños and the Government of Nicaragua to take all measures necessary to cope with the problems of good governance and the eradication of corruption, as a sine qua non for the development of the country.

The European Union will continue to support Nicaragua and President Bolaños, who will have to deal with major challenges such as the fight against poverty, internal political dialogue, national reconciliation and the relaunching of regional integration.

The European Union believes that the new President will implement the promised initiatives to reform electoral law and de-politicise the Supreme Electoral Council.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, and the EFTA countries, members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration.

**Internet: <http://ue.eu.int/Newsroom>
E-mail: press.office@consilium.eu.int**

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