



Brussels, 24 February 2014  
140224/01

## S T A T E M E N T

**by the Spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton**

**on the sentencing of demonstrators involved in the Bolotnaya Square events**

The spokesperson of Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission, issued the following statement today:

*"The High Representative is concerned about the verdict of guilt and prison sentences issued today by the Moscow Zamoskvoretsky District Court against seven of the eight indicted involved in the Bolotnaya Square events of 6 May 2012.*

*The charges brought against them and their sentences seem disproportionate in light of the nature of the events and the offences they are accused of. The outcome of the trial, given the procedural shortcomings and long pre-trial detention, raises questions once again as to the state of the rule of law. It further raises concerns as to the impact of such trials on the exercise of freedom of expression and assembly in Russia. The arrest of dozens of people who had gathered outside the court to hear the verdict is an additional source of concern.*

*The High Representative hopes that the sentences will be reconsidered in the appeal process and calls on Russia to uphold its international human rights commitments."*

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FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

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