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

The EU welcomes the way the presidential and parliamentary elections in the Russian republic of Chechnya were conducted. The elections represent the free will of the voters and form a legitimate base for the new authorities. The EU expresses the sincere hope that the election results will contribute to establishing the necessary democratic framework within which progress can be made towards a comprehensive solution of the conflict. The EU highly appreciates the contribution made by the OSCE mission in Grozny to the organization and monitoring of the elections.

Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Rumania, Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic align themselves with this declaration.

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