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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on Niger**

1. The European Union expresses deep concern about the way in which the first round of the presidential elections in Niger on 7-8 July was conducted. In particular, it deplores the decision taken by the Niger authorities to dissolve the independent national electoral commission during the voting process and to replace it with an alternative body. It is the view of the European Union that this decision by the Niger authorities, casts serious doubts on the credibility of the election results. It requests the Niger authorities to explain this decision and why observers found it impossible to assist in gathering and collating the election results.
2. The European Union urges the Niger authorities, in dealing with the critical situation which has resulted from their decision, to respect fully the fundamental freedoms of movement, expression and association of the Niger people. It attaches great importance to the restoration of all civil rights.
3. The European Union will examine, in the light of recent developments, its policies of economic and development cooperation with the Niger authorities.
4. The European Union calls for the full restoration of democratic civilian government in Niger through transparent processes. Free and fair elections will be crucial in this respect. The European Union will continue to follow the situation in Niger closely and in particular the preparation, holding and transparency of the forthcoming legislative elections on 22nd September.

Iceland, the Central European countries associated with the European Union and the associated countries Cyprus and Malta align themselves with this declaration.