



EUROPEAN UNION

Brussels, 9 October 2012  
A 448/12

## **Statement by the spokesperson of High Representative Catherine Ashton on the trial of Vladimir Kozlov in Kazakhstan**

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

*“The High Representative has noted with concern the outcome of the trial of Vladimir Kozlov, the leader of the opposition party “Alga!”, in Kazakhstan.*

*Mr. Kozlov has been sentenced to seven and a half years in prison and confiscation of his property for inciting social discord, attempting to overthrow the government of Kazakhstan and organising a criminal group that incited violence in Zhanaozen in December 2011.*

*The EU Delegation in Astana has been monitoring the trial, in co-operation with other international actors. While welcoming the opportunity to freely observe the trial, the EU noted several shortcomings in the judicial process. Namely, the trial processes did not provide clear insight into the investigation of the events, prove the guilt or direct involvement of Mr. Kozlov in the violence in Zhanaozen. Therefore, Mr. Kozlov’s sentence seems disproportionate and, given his political activities, seems to carry political overtones.*

*The European Union is and will continue to follow the developments very closely and to encourage the Kazakh authorities to review the process, in line with the international commitments and obligations of Kazakhstan. The High Representative assumes that Mr. Kozlov will be granted the right to a free, fair and transparent appeal process.”*

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**P R E S S**

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