

PRESS RELEASE

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**STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENCY ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION ON
THE CONSTITUTIONAL SITUATION IN KAZAKHSTAN**

- As the European Union has already pointed out, Kazakhstan is a member of the OSCE and in this capacity has made precise pledges. Last January it signed a cooperation and partnership agreement with the European Union containing a clause on respect for human rights.
- The European Union is therefore anxious to express its considerable concern at the crisis which is undermining the democratic institutions in Kazakhstan. It is following developments in the situation in Kazakhstan with the utmost attention.
- The European Union would like to see a return to normal political life as soon as possible in compliance with the pledges given by Kazakhstan in the context of the OSCE and the partnership with the Union.
- The European Union greatly regrets that by presidential decree of 25 March a referendum is being organized on 29 April on the extension of the President's term of office until the year 2000.
- The European Union thus calls for the early holding of free, multiparty legislative elections and the organization of the presidential elections scheduled for 1996, in accordance with the Kazakhstan constitution.
- The European Union trusts that the relevant international organizations will be invited to take part in the preparation and monitoring of the legislative and presidential elections which it hopes will be held on a free and democratic basis.