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**DECLARATION BY THE EUROPEAN UNION ON CHECHNYA**

The European Union **welcomes** the conclusion of the Agreement between the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Chernomyrdin and the Head of the Chechen Government Maskhadov on 23 November, which it regards as another important step on the road to a **lasting settlement** in Chechnya.

The European Union **expresses** its strong support for the determination of both sides to build on the **accords reached** in August last. It urges both sides to continue their efforts to find a **permanent negotiated settlement** and reiterates its view that the OSCE mission can continue to **play an important role** in this regard.

The European Union **pledges** its continued support for humanitarian efforts to relieve the plight of **refugees and displaced persons**.

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