

Brussels, 18 December 1997

13593/97 (Presse 404)
P 117/97

**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the assassination of Samuel Dokie in Liberia**

The European Union is gravely concerned at the violent death of an important representative of the opposition in Liberia, Mr Samuel Dokie, along with his wife and two members of his entourage. According to concurring sources, Mr Dokie and the three other persons were arrested in Gbarnga on 28 November by men who appeared to belong to the security or police forces. On 3 December all four were found dead in a burnt out car.

The European Union is afraid that the assassination of an important opponent will have a negative effect on the process of reconciliation and reconstruction. It is only in a climate of security and confidence that all Liberians can take an active part in that process.

The European Union would recall that President Taylor has on many occasions expressed his attachment to respect for human rights, the rule of law and national reconciliation. The EU therefore appeals urgently to the authorities in Liberia to identify those responsible for the death of Mr Dokie and his companions as soon as possible, to investigate with the utmost care and impartiality the motives for the crime, and to bring the guilty to justice. It is encouraged by the measures so far taken by the Liberian authorities, which have led to the arrest of four suspects.

The European Union repeats its willingness to support the peace and reconciliation process in Liberia but points out that its support for the reconstruction of the country is incompatible with a return to practices belonging to a tragic past.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated country Cyprus and the EFTA countries, members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration.