

PRESS RELEASE

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**Statement by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
concerning the Russian legislative elections on 17 December 1995**

The European Union welcomes the fact that legislative elections have been held in Russia on 17 December 1995 in accordance with the terms of the Constitution. Those elections represent a step forward by Russia in the process of consolidating shared democratic values, respect for human rights and compliance with the rule of law.

The European Union is pleased to note that the many international observers present during the elections, including those from the EU, have confirmed that the electoral process was in general conducted freely and fairly. The high level of participation is significant. The Central Electoral Committee cooperated wholeheartedly with the observers and functioned with a great degree of democratic transparency.

In agreement with the conclusions of the EU General Affairs Council of 20 November 1995 on future relations between the European Union and Russia, and with the statement on Russia by the Madrid European Council (15 December 1995), the EU hopes that free expression of the will of the Russian people will encourage consolidation of the reform process. The fully normal nature of these legislative elections has strengthened the EU's will to continue to work towards the success of the transition to democracy in Russia and the reforms aimed at producing a market economy.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union and the associated countries Cyprus and Malta align themselves with this declaration.

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