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**DECLARATION BY THE PRESIDENCY ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION ON
CINEP MURDERS**

The European Union is gravely concerned by the murder of two members of the organisation Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular (CINEP) and of Mr Calderon as well as by the continuing deplorable state of Human Rights in Colombia, including the grave personal risks that are faced by Human Rights defenders and the unacceptable high levels of impunity in Colombia.

Having taken note of the firm assurance of the government of Colombia that it will take all possible steps to help solve this murder case as soon as possible, the European Union urges the Colombian government to now make a very serious effort to fulfil its commitment to ensure the protection of all Human Rights and fundamental freedoms for everyone, including those who actively promote and defend Human Rights in Colombian society.

The European Union welcomes the declaration of the recently opened office in Santa Fé de Bogotá of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and its firm position on these issues.

While acknowledging that many of the acts of violence are not committed by government forces, the European Union deplores the murders or disappearances of elected public officials and candidates for public office as well as the forced and sometimes violent displacement of many rural communities that have taken place in the current year. The European Union is deeply concerned by the threats from different actors in the internal Colombian conflict against people participating in the forthcoming 1997/1998 elections.

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