

Brussels, 20 June 1997

9136/97 (Presse 208)  
P 65/97

**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union  
concerning the elections in Mali**

The European Union is keeping a careful watch on the course of events in the electoral process under way in Mali.

Given that the transition to democracy in Mali has always been regarded as a model, the European Union expresses its disquiet at the prevailing mood of boycott, which threatens to jeopardize the proper conduct of the democratic process and the stability of pluralist political structures in Mali. The European Union is keeping a close watch on the judicial proceedings involving the arrested leaders of opposition parties.

The European Union wishes all shades of opinion to be able to make themselves heard in the forthcoming elections in order for Mali's democratic process to move ahead smoothly, in compliance with the constitution. It calls on all political groupings to take an active part in the elections.

The European Union reaffirms its support for its Malian partners in consolidating the democratization process.

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