

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
concerning national dialogue in Burundi**

In the run-up to the opening of multi-party political negotiations at Arusha in Tanzania on 25 August 1997 under the auspices of the former President of Tanzania, Mr Julius Nyerere, the European Union expresses its full support for this process. It urges all parties in Burundi to embark definitively upon the path of negotiation and to refrain from setting preconditions which might create obstacles thereto. The European Union considers that representatives of all the political institutions and tendencies, without exception, should be able to take part in the negotiations.

The European Union renews its urgent appeal to all the parties to agree that an immediate ceasefire and the renunciation of all forms of violence should be the priority topics at the Arusha negotiations. It warns extremist circles in Burundi against making any attempt to hinder the process of negotiation and national reconciliation and calls upon them to support the peace process which should be conducted in a climate of trust and calm.

The European Union will continue to follow and support the efforts to achieve peace and the restoration of democracy in Burundi and remains willing to furnish technical assistance to the judicial and constitutional process. It welcomes the important contribution of the EU Special Envoy, Mr Ajello, of the special envoy of the Secretaries-General of the UN and of the OAU, Mr Sahnoun, and of the other international efforts, in particular that of the community of Sant'Egidio, to the peace process.

The European Union hereby appeals to all the States of the region to support a peaceful settlement of the Burundian crisis through dialogue and negotiation.