

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
on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

The EU expresses its deep concern at the deterioration of the internal situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and particularly condemns the acts of violence against civilians. It calls upon all the parties in conflict to respect human rights and humanitarian laws and not to persecute the civilian population on grounds of nationality or ethnic origin but to strictly observe the right to protection for refugees and displaced persons. The Union encourages cooperation between the Government of the DRC and the United Nations to find a solution which will protect the population groups concerned.

The EU is also greatly preoccupied by the information regarding the possibility of foreign interference in the country's internal affairs and agrees with the United Nations Charter and the OAU's fundamental principles in support of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the territorial integrity of neighbouring countries.

The EU emphasises that peaceful solutions must be found to resolve the current problems so that the process of reconstruction and democratisation can proceed. It is ready to contribute to those efforts and supports the démarches undertaken by the OAU and several African countries in that connection.

Finally, the EU calls for the safety of nationals of the Member States of the European Union and the staff of humanitarian organisations residing in the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to be guaranteed.

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