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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
in response to President Tudjman's HDZ congress speech**

The European Union is firmly convinced that reconciliation between different ethnic groups is the key to lasting peace and prosperity in the Western Balkans region. The European Union deplores therefore the tone and content of the speech delivered by President Tudjman at the Fourth HDZ Congress on 21 February, which, as well as being inconsistent with Croatia's international undertakings, casts serious doubt upon Croatia's commitment to the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its willingness to include ethnic Serbs and other minorities as full and equal members of Croatian society.

The European Union has repeatedly made clear that it expects the Croatian Government to uphold the Dayton Agreement to which it is a Party and its other international obligations and to demonstrate by actions as well as words its unswerving commitment to reconciliation. Croatia's performance in such areas will be a key factor in the development of closer relations between Croatia and the European Union.

Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia align themselves with this declaration.
