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Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on Niger

The European Union has learnt with disappointment about the fresh eruption of violence in Niger and about the subsequent reaction of the Nigerien authorities such as restrictions to the freedom of the press.

The European Union further deplores the arrest of members of the opposition and of the independent press and welcomes the release of some of them. It hopes that thorough investigations will be conducted into the accusations against the persons still remaining in custody and that they will have the benefit of due process of the law. The European Union also expresses its concern about the initiatives of some overzealous services who seem to act without the knowledge of the competent authorities. These incidents can only disrupt or further delay the democratisation process in Niger to which the European Union attaches the utmost importance.

The European Union calls upon all parties to refrain from any actions which could undermine efforts to end the present political impasse and to engage in a constructive dialogue with a view to restoring full democracy in the country. It hopes that the forthcoming local elections could prove to be a turning point in this respect.

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Cyprus, associated to the European Union and the EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration.