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

The European Union attaches great importance to its relationship with Nigeria in recognition of its pivotal regional and international role. Following the unexpected death of General Abacha, we hope that there will now be an early and peaceful return to democracy with the election of an accountable civilian Government which will restore and respect human rights and bring at last to the Nigerian people the benefit of Nigeria's great wealth.

The EU welcomes General Abubakar's call to all Nigerians to join in a process of reconstruction and reconciliation. This, together with the release of detainees and the restoration of the rule of law would be important steps in a process leading to Nigeria's return to its rightful place in the international community.

The European Union reiterates its wish for constructive dialogue with Nigeria, including in the context of the forthcoming ACP-EU post Lomé negotiations. The European Union remains ready to support Nigeria in its efforts to establish a democracy representative of the Nigerian people in all their diversity.

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