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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 Guinea-Bissau**

The EU welcomes the agreement reached on 26 August in Praia, Cape Verde, between the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the self-appointed Military Junta, transforming the previous truce into a cease fire. The Agreement constitutes a very positive step towards a negotiated solution to the conflict in that country. The EU therefore urges both parties to abide by it.

The Union welcomes particularly the decision to open Bissau Airport in order to secure the viability of humanitarian aid as well as the return of the refugees and displaced persons. Noteworthy also is the recognition by both parties of the democratic institutions and legality.

The EU commends the mediation efforts led jointly by the Contact Group of the Community of Portuguese speaking Countries (CPLP) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), hoping that a lasting solution to the conflict in Guinea-Bissau can be reached in subsequent negotiations.

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.