

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 occasion of the conclusion of the mandate
of UNTAES on 15 January 1998

On the occasion of the conclusion of the mandate of the UN Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia (UNTAES), the European Union wishes to pay tribute to the work of the Administration, to the past and present Administrators and to successive force commanders for their achievements. The Union also expresses its appreciation of the contributions made both by the Government of Croatia and by the local community to the peaceful reintegration of the region. The EU is pleased to have been able to contribute substantially to this goal.

The Union will continue to follow carefully events in Eastern Slavonia and in Croatia as a whole, bearing in mind their importance for the future development of political and economic relations between the Union and Croatia. The Union calls on the Government, at national and local level, to ensure the right of refugees and displaced persons to return, respect for the rule of law, the equitable treatment of all citizens regardless of ethnic origin and the protection of minorities. It must make an unswerving commitment to the reintegration process. The Union welcomes the readiness of the OSCE to assist Croatia in meeting these and other obligations.

5265/98 (Presse 7 - G)

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There is now an important opportunity to show that different communities can live together in peace and in mutual respect. This is an integral part of the idea of democratic Europe. The Union calls on all Croatian citizens, Serbs and Croats alike, in Eastern Slavonia and throughout Croatia, to see the conclusion of the UNTAES mandate as marking a new era of cooperation between them.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated country Cyprus, Iceland and Liechtenstein align themselves with this declaration.
