

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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**declaration by the European Union
on the situation in Guinea-Bissau**

The European Union is pleased that the lawful constitution of Guinea-Bissau has been upheld, despite the attempt at destabilisation on 20 November 2000 and the clashes which have cast a shadow over the country.

Its full support goes to the legitimate authorities in their efforts to bring about national reconciliation and consolidate democracy. In this connection, the European Union will be particularly alert to action to further human rights and civil liberties, with due regard for political, cultural and religious diversity.

It is concerned that the programme of demobilisation and restructuring of the armed forces should be brought to a successful conclusion.

It urges the authorities to abide closely by the principle of good governance, which it regards as particularly important.

On this basis, the European Union wishes to reaffirm its readiness to assist Guinea-Bissau in its national reconstruction effort. It calls on the international community to join in the task.

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

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