

**P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

Brussels, 22 December 2000

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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union  
on the situation in Guinea**

The European Union is deeply concerned at the deterioration in the humanitarian situation caused by the recent attacks carried out especially by the RUF in Guinée-Forestière, in particular at Guekedou and Kissidougou. It deplores the fact that these attacks have caused much loss of life and forced local people and refugees to flee the area.

The continuing insecurity in the south and east of Guinea makes it difficult for humanitarian organisations to deliver and distribute the assistance urgently needed by displaced persons and refugees. The European Union therefore calls on all the parties concerned, in particular Liberia, to make these organisations' task easier by guaranteeing them unlimited access to the disaster zones and refraining from any act of aggression against their staff.

The European Union urges the States in the region rapidly to make use of all the conflict prevention mechanisms and fora for discussion provided by regional and international organisations, primarily ECOWAS, the Mano River Union and the United Nations, in order to stabilise the security situation.

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The European Union supports ECOWAS's mediation efforts and is interested to note the recommendations of the Heads of State or Government meeting in Bamako on 15 and 16 December 2000. It is ready to consider the detailed arrangements for assisting ECOWAS's efforts to restore peace and security in the region.

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

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