PRESS RELEASE

Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the presidential elections in Kyrgyzstan

The European Union is following the process of democratisation in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan very closely. The presidential elections were of particular significance in this context.

In its declaration of 10 October 2000 the Presidency of the European Union called on the Kyrgyz authorities to take the necessary steps to ensure a free and democratic ballot in accordance with the principles of the OSCE and the values on which the partnership between the European Union and Kyrgyzstan is based.

The European Union is concerned at the conditions under which the presidential elections of 29 October took place, as described in the preliminary report drawn up by the OSCE's ODIHR observer mission. It concurs with the OSCE that the elections were not held in accordance with OSCE standards. Grave irregularities were observed, particularly in the way polling stations operated. In addition, the candidates did not all have equal access to the media.

The European Union regrets that the way in which these elections were held marks a retreat from the process of democratisation and the establishment of the rule of law in Kyrgyzstan.

It calls on the government of Kyrgyzstan to honour its undertakings in the OSCE and in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the European Union on the subject of democratisation and establishment of the rule of law in Kyrgyzstan.

The European Union reiterates its readiness to assist Kyrgyzstan with building democratic institutions and establishing the rule of law.

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