PRESS RELEASE

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Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on Angola

The European Union fully supports the strong condemnation of the shooting down of a Russian Antonov-26 commercial aircraft by the Angolan rebel movement UNITA on 12 May 1999 as stated by the President of the UN Security Council on 19 May. Neither the fate of the Russian crew nor of the Angolan passengers has been cleared up yet, nor could the investigation into the shooting down of other aircraft over UNITA controlled territory, including the downings on 26 December 1998 and 2 January 1999 of two aircraft chartered by the United Nations, be brought to an end.

The European Union therefore urgently appeals to UNITA to release the three Russian crew members and any other possible hostages. In addition it appeals to the Angolan Government and in particular to UNITA to fully cooperate with the United Nations.

The European Union is seriously concerned about the rapid deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Angola. While remaining committed to helping to alleviate the suffering of the Angolan population affected by the war, the European Union reminds the Government and in particular UNITA of their responsibility to cooperate in full with the United Nations and humanitarian organizations in their efforts to provide assistance and relief to all those in need in Angola.

Furthermore the European Union recalls its declaration of 28 December 1998

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