

**P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

Brussels, 10 August 1999

10395/99 (Presse 248)  
P 78/99

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

The European Union expresses its profound concern at the recent escalation of the military confrontation in Afghanistan. The EU is dismayed that the Taliban should have ignored the call in the Tashkent Declaration for the Afghan conflict to be settled through peaceful political negotiation and should have instead launched a major offensive.

The EU appeals to the warring parties to immediately cease fighting and to return to the negotiating table. The EU reiterates its stand on Afghanistan expressed in the Common Position of January 1999 and will continue to give its full support to the United Nations efforts in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The EU is particularly concerned about the suffering the fighting is causing to the civilian population and about the deteriorating humanitarian condition of the increasing number of internally displaced people. All the parties should abide by the principles of international law including respect for universal human rights and humanitarian law and ensure free and safe access for humanitarian aid.

The EU is profoundly disturbed by the reports of forced deportation of civilians by the Taliban from their places of residence. The EU urges the Taliban to end this practice immediately and allow those forcibly deported to return.

The EU calls upon all those states who interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan to stop. The EU further calls on the neighbouring states to prevent the flow of arms and personnel from and through their countries and to use their influence with Afghan factions to support the UN peace efforts.

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

---

10395/99 (Presse 248 - G)

EN