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DECLARATION ON LIBERIA BY THE PRESIDENCY ON BEHALF  
OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. The European Union welcomes the ongoing efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to restore the peace process in Liberia. In particular, it welcomes the outcome of the meeting of ECOWAS Heads of State on 17 August at which they endorsed proposals in this regard which had been developed by ECOWAS Foreign Ministers.
2. The European Union is convinced that the new timetable for the implementation of the Abuja Agreement - including the holding of free and fair elections on 30 May 1997 and the installation of a new Government on 15 June 1997 - together with the appointment of Ruth Perry as the new chairperson of the Council of State, provides the best possible framework for reestablishing the peace process in Liberia. The European Union urges all parties to the conflict to fulfil their obligations within the Abuja time frame as endorsed by the ECOWAS Heads of State on 17 August. In this regard, the Union fully supports the proposed implementation of sanctions by ECOWAS against those who obstruct the implementation of the Agreement and the decision of ECOWAS Heads of State not to recognise any government that came to power in Liberia through the use of force.
3. The Union considers that the continued involvement of UNOMIL and ECOMOG are essential to the success of the new arrangements devised by ECOWAS in terms of implementing the Abuja Agreement and urges all sides to co-operate fully with both.
4. In addition to its ongoing commitment to provide humanitarian assistance to Liberia, the European Union reaffirms its willingness to support the rehabilitation and recovery of Liberia, in consultation and co-operation with other donors, in the context of the Abuja peace process. Moreover, the European Union is willing to support reconciliation programmes aimed at encouraging the creation of a safe political, economic and social space, within which there would be a full role for local initiatives, and based on justice and peace. The Union considers support for activities with specific reconciliatory objectives, seeking to rebuild links between competing or divided groups, as essential.