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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union**  
**concerning the fire at the La Planta prison**  
**in Caracas on 22 October 1996**

The European Union expresses its grave preoccupation concerning the tragic events at the La Planta prison in Caracas on 22 October in which 25 detainees - one of them a citizen of an E.U. Member state - died and it extends its sympathy to the relatives of the deceased.

The European Union acknowledges the expression by the Venezuelan authorities of regret and condemnation of what occurred. It also notes with interest the intentions and actions of the government of Venezuela aimed at enlarging the capacity of and improving the internal security in prisons and adapting them to the requirements of human rights. The European Union hopes that the Venezuelan authorities will actively pursue these efforts. In this connection the Union recalls that the European Commission has offered technical and financial assistance for projects related to the enlargement of prison capacity and to promoting human rights.

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