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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union  
on the upcoming electoral process in Nicaragua**

The European Union follows with great interest the preparations of the upcoming general elections to be held in Nicaragua in November 2001.

The Union considers that a representative, inclusive and transparent electoral process would greatly contribute to the strengthening of democracy in the country.

In this respect, the Union supports a process which will enable all parties and candidates that fulfil the legal requirements to fully participate in the elections.

With a view to contribute to the satisfactory development of the elections, the Union is currently exploring the possibilities of offering its assistance and support, in accordance with the Nicaraguan authorities, by means of, inter alia, an election observation mission.

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

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