

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Brussels, 26 April 2001

8081/01 (Presse 163)

P 86/01

**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the release of the "Djakova/Djakovica group"**

The European Union welcomes the decision by the Serbian Supreme Court to release the 145 Kosovo Albanians of the so-called Djakova/Djakovica Group. These persons were collectively sentenced in May 2000 to prison terms of between seven and thirteen years for acts of terrorism allegedly carried out during the NATO campaign in 1999.

This constitutes a further act by Belgrade to rectify politically biased sentences passed during the Milosevic regime. The European Union now expects Serbia to complete the review of the remaining cases as rapidly as possible, in order to correct the injustices of the Milosevic era. That would constitute another confidence building measure, conducive to a reduction of tensions.

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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