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**PRESIDENCY STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION  
CONCERNING THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC**

The European Union is deeply concerned at the deteriorating situation in the Central African Republic, and especially in Bangui, where confrontations between armed forces have already left victims, particularly among the civilian population.

These confrontations have practically paralysed the country's economic activity and its administration, thus jeopardizing the emergency plan that was adopted by the Government of National Unity in July 1996 with considerable financial assistance from the international community, particularly the European Union.

The Union notes the truce established between President Patasse and representatives of the mutineers following the conciliation mission carried out by four African Heads of State after the France-Africa summit in Ouagadougou.

It supports the mediation effort to be undertaken by the International Monitoring Committee led by General Toumani to find a peaceful and lasting solution to the crisis.

The EU calls on the Central African political forces to take advantage of these efforts and work together towards a lasting solution to the conflict, this being an essential precondition for the restoration of the country's financial, economic and social situation with the help of the international community.

Iceland, Norway and the Associated countries Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic and Slovenia align themselves with this declaration.