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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the Inter Tajik peace talks**

The European Union welcomes the results of the latest talks in Mashad and Moscow between the Tajik Government and the United Tajik Opposition. In both rounds significant progress was made in the implementation of the 23 December 1996 Moscow Agreement. The success of the Tajik peace process is vital for the stabilisation of the entire Central Asian region and the security and prosperity of its peoples. The EU therefore hopes that the Commission for National Reconciliation will soon be able to start its work towards the establishment of a lasting peace in Tajikistan. It calls upon all parties in Tajikistan to cooperate with the Commission. The EU further calls upon all parties to the conflict to ensure the safety of United Nations and other personnel engaged in the provision of aid and assistance in Tajikistan and to avoid any hostage taking.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, Cyprus, Iceland and Norway align themselves with this declaration.
