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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union**  
**on the banning of the Refah party in Turkey**

The European Union notes with regret the decision of the Turkish Constitutional Court on 16 January 1998 to order the closure of the Welfare Party, to confiscate its property, and to ban certain present and former members of that party from being members of the Turkish Parliament or from further political activity for five years.

The European Union also notes statements by the Turkish authorities that this decision is in accordance with the provisions of the Turkish Constitution. However, the European Union is concerned at the implications for democratic pluralism and freedom of expression, and hopes that Turkey will make clear its continuing commitment to these fundamental democratic principles.