

**P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on Lesotho**

The EU is deeply concerned over the current situation in Lesotho and calls for the rapid re-establishing of law and order in the country. The Union regrets the loss of lives which has been caused in recent days and commends all efforts undertaken to guarantee the safety of civilians, both Basotho and foreigners, and to prevent further bloodshed and destruction.

The immediate objective now must be to create conditions in which the parties can discuss their differences peacefully, and reach a negotiated political settlement. The EU believes this is the most appropriate way in which to bring about genuine stability in the longer term.

The EU hopes that the Lesotho police and security forces can resume full control as soon as possible, allowing the SADC forces to withdraw.

The EU will continue to follow closely events in that country.