

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

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Declaration by the European Union on Burma

The Council has once again considered the deteriorating internal situation in Burma. It remains deeply concerned at the lack of a positive response from the Burmese authorities to the repeated calls for them to take steps towards the promotion of democracy and human rights, and of national reconciliation. It has accordingly extended and strengthened the EU Common Position through a widening of the visa ban by explicitly including transit visas under the current ban and its extension to cover Burmese authorities in the tourism sector, while ensuring that the ban is applied rigorously to all individual members of the SPDC and the military, together with their families. It also echoes the view, expressed by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, that, in the present situation, it is inappropriate for tourists to visit Burma.

In these circumstances, although Burma has become a member of ASEAN, the EU cannot agree to Burmese accession to the EC-ASEAN Agreement. However, given the importance of the EC-ASEAN relationship, it has decided to accept a Burmese presence, under special conditions to be agreed upon, at the next meeting of the Joint Committee under the EC-ASEAN Agreement. This is without prejudice to Burmese representation at future meetings held under that agreement, which will need to be decided in the light of the situation in Burma.

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Cyprus, associated to the European Union and the EFTA countries members of the European Economic Area Iceland and Liechtenstein align themselves with this declaration.