

Brussels, 31 January 2000

5042/00 (Presse 6)
P 006/00

**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on
the normalisation of Sudanese relations with neighbouring countries**

The European Union welcomes the recent steps towards normalisation of bilateral relations between Sudan and its neighbours, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda, and reaffirms the importance of a constructive dialogue aiming at stability and co-operation in the region. It recalls that the normalisation of such relations is one of the elements addressed in the current "renewed dialogue" between the European Union and the Government of Sudan. The European Union looks forward to further steps in Sudan's relations with its neighbours to enhance the prospect of peace, stability and co-operation in the region.

The European Union encourages the Sudanese and the Ugandan authorities to abide by the provisions of the agreement signed on 8 December 1999. The European Union calls on both parties to renounce any military action, to cease military or logistical support to any rebel groups in each other's territories and to end the climate of hostility that has caused immense suffering to the civilian population. The European Union encourages the release of all prisoners of war and the return of all abducted persons - especially children - to their families.

The European Union also welcomes, together with the consolidation of relations between Sudan and Ethiopia, the Sudanese and Eritrean decision to resume diplomatic relations, which will help to improve the security and stability of the region. It encourages the opening of common borders and the resumption of scheduled flights between the two countries.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, and the EFTA countries, members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration.