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Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on Lebanon

The European Union has been following very closely the situation in southern Lebanon and expresses its deep concern at the escalation of hostilities, its regret at the deaths and injuries which this has caused; and its sympathy for the injured and the bereaved families. In response to attacks on its forces Israel has launched air attacks against the Lebanese infrastructure, causing Lebanese civilian casualties. In this context, the European Union recalls that the April 1996 Understanding in particular aims to protect civilians from attack and the Union regrets any breach of this Understanding. This escalation endangers recent progress in the Peace Process and the prospects of peace negotiations resuming on the Syrian and also on the Lebanese Track.

The European Union calls on all sides to show restraint and to observe strictly the terms of the cease-fire Understanding of April 1996; and calls for the early convening of the Monitoring Committee to secure a de-escalation of tension and to prevent further violations of the Understanding.

These incidents confirm the urgent need for renewed efforts to achieve a lasting peace in the region, including implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 425.
