

PRESS RELEASE

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**DECLARATION BY THE PRESIDENCY ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION ON THE
ELECTIONS IN CAMBODIA**

The European Union notes with satisfaction that the initial report from the Joint International Observer Group concluded that the polling and counting was a process which was free and fair to an extent that enables it to reflect, in a credible way, the will of the Cambodian people. In the end, efforts to intimidate sections of the Cambodian population appear not to have significantly influenced the conduct or the climate of polling day itself.

The very high number of registered voters who turned up at polling stations to cast their ballot has given a clear signal that the Cambodian people are embracing democracy and are determined to decide their own political future.

There were no reports of cases of serious violence on voting day except for one armed attack in Anlong Veng which led to the death of ten people. The European Union strongly condemns this heinous act and expresses its sincere condolences to the families of the victims.

The EU have been deeply involved in the electoral process, especially in voter registration and in polling observation by dispatching some 200 election observers. The EU commends its Special Representative Glenys Kinnock, Chief Election Observer Ambassador Sven Linder and all election observers for their courage and substantial contribution towards internationally acceptable standards for democratic elections. The EU also notes with appreciation the excellent co-operation and co-ordination between the European Observer Unit with the UN and other observer groups working together in the Joint International Observer Group.

A final consolidated assessment of elections in Cambodia will only be possible after all votes have been counted and where necessary recounted, the full reports of all election observers thoroughly analyzed, complaints examined and appeals processes carried out satisfactorily.

The EU calls upon all political forces in Cambodia to seize this opportunity to work together to the fullest extent towards national reconciliation and national reconstruction. The European Union expresses its strong hope that with the elections the foundation for the future well-being and prosperity of the people of Cambodia has been laid.

As stated by the European Union Special Representative, Glenys Kinnock on 29 July 1998 it is the wish of the European Union to continue to engage constructively with Cambodia particularly in the weeks and months ahead. Return to political normalcy will encourage the EU to consider new assistance programmes to help Cambodia in its economic recovery.

The Central and Eastern European countries and Cyprus associated with the European Union and the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration.
