

Brussels, 25 July 2000

10578/00 (Presse 272)

P 108/00

**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the development of the situation in Fiji**

The European Union welcomes the safe release of all the hostages but remains concerned at the development of the situation in Fiji, which is still unconstitutional, unstable and precarious.

It deplores the deposing of President Mara and the replacement of Mr Chaudry's democratically elected government and is outraged by the repeal of the 1997 Constitution. In the interests of the people of Fiji and in order to maintain stability in Fiji itself and elsewhere in the region, it considers it essential that the rule of law be restored and that the political rights of all elements of the Fijian nation be respected on the basis of a democratic constitution and a government elected democratically and reflecting the real situation in the country.

The European Union will consider appropriate measures if these conditions are not fulfilled as soon as possible and may well be obliged to review its policy towards Fiji – particularly as regards development cooperation – should the democratic rule of law not be restored. In the context of the Lomé Convention, this would imply application of Article 366a.

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.