

PRESS RELEASE

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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
concerning the Arta conference on peace in Somalia**

The European Union welcomes the designation of a transitional national assembly, representing all shades of opinion in Somali society, by delegates at the Arta peace conference. It hopes that this first step towards a revival of Somali national institutions and the formation of a provisional government will help restore peace, which the vast majority of the Somali people desire.

The European Union commends Djibouti's efforts, in hosting the Arta conference, to resolve a deadly conflict which is destabilising the region and reaffirms its support for President Guelleh's peace plan.

It calls on the Somali players remaining on the sidelines of the peace process, in particular those who have built up a positive capacity for governance in some parts of the country, to join the promising venture embarked upon at Arta for the reconstruction of the Somali state and Somalia's unity. The European Union would like to see every possible effort made on all sides in order for that aim to be achieved and hopes that, within a framework of understanding, the countries of the region will continue to support a process essential to peaceful development throughout the Horn of Africa.

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.