

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
concerning the situation in Côte d'Ivoire**

The European Union welcomes the decision by President Eyadema, Chairman-in-Office of the OAU, and the mandated Heads of State to hold a conciliation meeting on 25 September to which all protagonists in the Côte d'Ivoire crisis have been invited.

The European Union reiterates its interest in the rapid conclusion of the transition process and the proper conduct of elections, with the highest possible degree of transparency and openness, to which the OAU initiative could make a very useful contribution.

Disturbed at the mounting violence in Côte d'Ivoire, only a few weeks before the presidential election on 22 October, and at the resulting risks of destabilisation for the entire region, the European Union fervently hopes that all political forces in Côte d'Ivoire will attend this meeting likely to help ease tensions.

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.

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