

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

Brussels, 22 September 2000

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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on implementation of the Lusaka Agreement**

The European Union,

referring to the Lusaka Agreement of 1 September 1999, its common position of 8 November 1999 and its Declarations of 16 July 1999, 30 November 1999, 9 June 2000 and 21 August 2000, the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, and particularly Resolution 1304, and to the Declaration by the Chairman of the Security Council of 5 September 2000,

and reacting to the statements made by the Congolese authorities on 23 August 2000 in Kinshasa before the diplomatic corps and the proposals made by the President of the DRC in a letter recently addressed to the UN Secretary-General and the Member States of the European Union:

- reaffirms its attachment to the Lusaka Agreement, the only consensual reference point currently serving as a basis for a negotiated solution to the conflict and the action of the international community, and particularly that of the UN and the OAU, in favour of a return to peace in the DRC and the region,
- is alarmed at proposals to suspend application of that Agreement and the likelihood that such an initiative would involve of a general resumption of hostilities and, consequently, of jeopardising the United Nations peacekeeping operation,
- urges the parties to the Lusaka Agreement to agree on ways of giving fresh impetus to the peace process,

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- recalls that a return to peace in the DRC and the Great Lakes region is conditional upon respect for the rules of international law, consolidation of the ceasefire and a negotiated settlement of the problems of security, protection of the population and of human rights and the restoration of democracy,
- recalls the devastating effect of the war on the population and urges all parties to facilitate the movement and the work of humanitarian personnel and organisations,
- in order to preserve the peace process begun in Lusaka and to render the Agreement operational once again, appeals to the government of the DRC and to the other signatories to the Lusaka Agreement to restore a minimum of mutual confidence by respecting the ceasefire, implementing the withdrawal provided for by the Kampala Agreement and the tripartite Agreement (Uganda, Rwanda, United Nations) concerning the town of Kisangani, and by confirming and applying urgently the guarantees for security and free movement approved by them and confirmed verbally by the Kinshasa Government on the occasion of Mr Abubakar's mission but still not effective, though essential to the deployment of MONUC,
- also calls upon the governments of Uganda and Rwanda, as well as the other signatory states, put into practice without delay UN Security Council Resolution 1304 and to implement their proposals for redeploying their troops in the DRC,
- considers that a return to peace can be assisted by direct negotiations, provided that the terms of the Lusaka Agreement, the relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions and the interests of all the parties to the conflict are taken into consideration and that such negotiations aim to restore the authority of the Congolese State throughout its territory,
- reaffirms its strong support for intercongolese political dialogue and, in accordance with the spirit and the letter of the Lusaka Agreement, appeals to the Congolese Government also to take the necessary measures without further delay, to ensure in particular that individuals are free to become involved in political activities, and that a political dialogue is initiated among the Congolese, a pre-requisite for the establishment of the rule of law and civil peace in the DRC. It also urges the other Congolese parties to work in a constructive manner so as to facilitate this dialogue.

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.