

**P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

Brussels, 21 August 2000

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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union concerning  
UNMIK's taking over responsibility for the Zvecan lead-smelting factory in Kosovo**

The European Union approves the decision by UNMIK to take over responsibility for the Zvecan lead-smelting factory in Kosovo.

This measure was necessitated by the extremely high level of pollution caused by the operation of the factory, which posed a serious danger to public health and the environment. The European Union deplores the fact that the team that had been administering the Zvecan factory up to now had not taken any steps to limit the danger, thereby obliging UNMIK to intervene.

The European Union notes that, in doing so, UNMIK was acting in accordance with the mandate it received under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, which states that the reconstruction of infrastructure and the rehabilitation of the economy form part of the responsibilities assigned, on a transitional basis, to UNMIK.

In implementing its decision, UNMIK has received the assistance of KFOR in accordance with the provisions of Resolution 1244. The European Union deplores the fact that acts of violence have been committed against the forces of UNCIVPOL and KFOR and condemns any attempt to delay the implementation of Resolution 1244 or to oppose the decisions of the UNSGSR.

**Internet:** <http://ue.eu.int/Newsroom>  
**E-mail:** [press.office@consilium.eu.int](mailto:press.office@consilium.eu.int)

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The European Union will lend its support to UNMIK's efforts to combat the risk of environmental deterioration caused by the state of the Trepca industrial and mining complex. Via the European Agency for Reconstruction, it will provide a maximum of EUR 6 million in aid for the implementation of the plan drawn up by UNMIK for aspects relating to workers' safety and to the environment.

The European Union would point out, moreover, that several of its Member States have decided to provide financial assistance, on a national basis, for the implementation of the plan.

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