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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
concerning the 1999 Parliamentary election in Indonesia**

The Presidency on behalf of the European Union has observed with great respect the enormous efforts undertaken by the Indonesian people and its government to organise free and fair elections in Indonesia.

Considering the fact that Indonesia is emerging from a serious economic and political crisis and wants to achieve political stability through democratic reform in the shortest time possible the timely holding of the election in 311,000 polling stations in a nation with 128 million eligible voters on more than 7000 inhabited Islands can be considered a great achievement. The Independent Election Commission is to be congratulated. Compared to the size of the operation and the circumstances only relatively minor shortcomings have been reported so far, mainly in relation to technicalities such as timely delivery of material, quality of ink or procedural matters. The Presidency on behalf of the European Union wishes to acknowledge that excellent cooperation has existed between local and European observers. On the basis of the experience of the EU observers we are confident that the election can be considered as free and transparent. It should constitute a basis for the establishment of a government in accordance with the democratically expressed will of the people.

We have observed with satisfaction the seriousness and enthusiasm with which the Indonesian people have expressed their determination to embrace democracy. This election is a milestone on this road. We wish the Indonesian people well for the difficult tasks and challenges in the months to come. The European Union will be a willing partner with Indonesia in building a strong democracy.

The actual results of the European Observation Mission will be explained by Ambassador Morgan, who is heading the European Election Observation Unit.

This assessment does not affect the EU position on the status of East Timor.