

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 sexual exploitation of children**

1. The European Union welcomes the outcome of the World Congress Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, held in Stockholm from 27 to 31 August 1996. The Declaration adopted in Stockholm emphasizes not only the need for increased national activity but also the need to promote international cooperation in the fields of prevention and prosecution of the sexual exploitation of children and to ensure that child victims of such criminal practices are not punished but on the contrary receive protection. The Declaration stresses the need to establish a genuine partnership between governments, international organizations and all sectors of society in order to achieve these objectives. The Agenda for Action accompanying the Declaration is designed to highlight existing international commitments, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to identify priorities for action and for cooperation and to help implement the relevant international instruments.

2. The European Union notes with approval the decision of the host country, Sweden, to ask the United Nations Secretary-General to have the Declaration and Agenda for Action circulated to all United Nations Member States. That welcome initiative represents a first step in putting into practice the commitments entered into in Stockholm.

3. In accordance with the statement it made in Stockholm, the European Union intends to press ahead firmly with its concerted action and cooperation aimed at putting a stop to this particularly evil and cruel modern-day form of slavery. At the forthcoming proceedings of the 51st session of the United Nations General Assembly, the European Union will strive for the implementation of the recommendations adopted in Stockholm. The European Union will also continue its efforts to have traffic in human beings made a criminal offence internationally.

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In order to promote the rights of the child and ensure their full implementation, the European Union will continue its endeavours to have the Convention on the Rights of the Child ratified by all United Nations Member States which have not yet done so and to go on to make sure that it is actually put into practice.

4. Europe's resolve will also be shown through fresh initiatives in all appropriate European bodies. The Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs, meeting within the Council in Dublin on 26 and 27 September 1996, will seek to step up police and judicial cooperation in acting to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Measures could be taken under the Europol Convention and by way of special new cooperation instruments.

5. In addition to its commitment to strengthen police and judicial cooperation, the European Union is conscious of the need to provide physical and psychological support for the victims of such outrages and to promote their recovery and re-integration in accordance with the Declaration adopted in Stockholm.
