

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
on human rights in Namibia**

The European Union states its concern about threats and verbal attacks against minorities in Namibia. Official statements against minorities, inter alia against homosexuals, as well as declarations of xenophobic nature, are unacceptable and indicate worrying signs of increasing intolerance. The European Union also expresses its concern about the Government's ban on advertising in the independent media.

These statements and actions contrast with the politics of reconciliation, tolerance, harmony and unity in diversity adopted by the Government of Namibia after independence and which won the country rightful acclaim, both domestically and internationally.

The European Union encourages the Government of Namibia to maintain its respect of human rights, to uphold the rule of law, and to pursue its policies to create the right conditions for the realisation of the country's full potential. The European Union considers that offensive statements against minorities in the country damage confidence in Namibia's future and undermine the Government's laudable efforts to attract foreign investment, develop the tourist industry and improve the living standards of the Namibian people.

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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