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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union**  
**on the sentences against Dr. Saad Eddin Ibrahim/Ibn Khaldoun Centre**

The European Union is deeply disturbed by the harsh sentences handed down by the Egyptian Supreme State Security Court on 21 May 2001 against Dr. Saad Eddin Ibrahim and staff members of the Ibn Khaldoun Centre. Dr. Ibrahim was sentenced to seven years imprisonment on charges which included accepting foreign funding without authorisation (including from the EU) and for harming Egypt's reputation abroad. The staff members of the Centre were given prison terms of between two to five years. The European Union monitored the trial as an observer. The speed at which the verdict was reached raises concerns that the Court did not take fully into account evidence for the defence, some of which was submitted on the day the verdict was given. This is particularly worrying since there is no right to appeal the verdict on the substance of the case, but only on procedural grounds. Dr. Ibrahim is an Egyptian intellectual of international repute. The European Union has co-operated with the Ibn Khaldoun Centre for several years and has i.a. funded women's projects and voter education. These activities are in line with the principles of the Barcelona Declaration, adopted in 1995 by the 15 European Union Member States and the 12 Mediterranean Partners, including Egypt. The European Union reiterates that it attaches great importance to the development of Civil Society and that support to NGOs and Civil Society is an integral feature of its bilateral programmes with Egypt.

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