

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 the opening of the inter-Congolese dialogue**

The European Union considers that the inter-Congolese dialogue constitutes a cornerstone of the Lusaka Agreement and is essential for national reconciliation and the return to peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The European Union therefore welcomes the holding of the meeting in Gaborone on 20 August, and urges all those participants in the inter-Congolese dialogue who have been invited by the facilitator, Mr Masire, to go to that meeting and to take part in proceedings in a constructive spirit.

The European Union and its Member States, as providers of political and financial support for the inter-Congolese dialogue, will closely follow the progress of that meeting and will assess the spirit of conciliation and the constructive and creative attitudes of those taking part.

The European Union calls on all participants to show the political courage and willingness to grasp this historic opportunity for reconciliation between all the Congolese 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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