

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 East Timor**

The European Union welcomes this historic moment for the East Timorese people, who have just taken part in the first democratic elections in their history. That crucial step paves the way for the establishment of political institutions for a new, democratic State.

The European Union is pleased to note the preliminary findings of its observer mission, reporting that elections to the East Timorese Constituent Assembly passed off calmly and peacefully on Thursday 30 August 2001.

The European Union congratulates the people of East Timor and their leaders, who have embarked upon a long independence process, now bringing its reward. The Union also applauds the United Nations, whose transitional administration of the territory enables the process to be brought to fruition.

The European Union takes this opportunity to reiterate its full support for consolidation of the path to independence and would encourage East Timor's political representatives to follow the popular will freely expressed in these elections.

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