

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 bridge between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan**

The European Union welcomes the announcement of the re-opening of the Friendship Bridge between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. This action by the Uzbek government should allow the volume of humanitarian aid entering Afghanistan from the north to be greatly increased.

The Union expresses its hope and expectation that humanitarian aid provided by the Union and others will now have full access to Afghanistan from Uzbekistan. The Union stresses the important role played by NGOs in alleviating the plight of the Afghan people. International cooperation will be essential to address the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan as winter approaches.

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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