

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 Democratic Republic of Congo**

The European Union commends the Governments of Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe as well as President Chiluba and the other mediators for their successful diplomatic efforts that led to the signing of the cease-fire agreement in Lusaka on 10 July 1999. The EU welcomes this agreement, which is crucial for the restoration of peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the entire Central African region, and calls upon all belligerent parties to strictly abide by this agreement and to refrain from any action putting it at risk.

The European Union especially calls upon the Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (RCD) and the Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo (MLC) to immediately cease all hostilities and sign the cease-fire agreement. The European Union also appeals to the Governments of Rwanda and Uganda to use their influence on the RCD and the MLC in order to convince them to respect the cease-fire immediately, to settle their leadership differences and to sign this agreement without further delay. The European Union considers that the political credibility of the rebel leaders depends on their willingness to put the interests of the Congolese people before their personal leadership ambitions.

The European Union reiterates that it considers the agreement reached in Lusaka as a crucial step towards the restoration of peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the entire region. An end to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo is essential for the development efforts undertaken in all the countries militarily engaged in this conflict. For this reason, the European Union will follow closely the implementation of the Lusaka agreement and in particular the respect of the cease-fire by all belligerent countries, and duly take this into consideration with regard to the development of all aspects of its future relations with the countries concerned.

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The European Union calls upon all belligerents to respect human rights and international humanitarian law in the areas under their control and to grant unhindered access to the delivery of humanitarian aid to populations in need.

The European Union pledges to support the implementation of the peace agreement signed on 10 July in Lusaka, provided that the belligerent parties themselves respect and implement this agreement in accordance with the terms set out therein. In particular, the European Union is ready to consider assistance to facilitate the return of refugees and displaced people, the reintegration of disaffected soldiers and combatants, national reconciliation and the social and economic rehabilitation of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The European Union also underlines its readiness to support the UN and the OAU which both have an important role in the implementation of the peace agreement.
