

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Brussels, 14 April 1999

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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the outcome of the trial of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim**

1. The European Union notes with deep concern today's verdict against Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, the former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, and his sentencing to six years imprisonment. Recalling its statements of 2 October and 27 November 1998, the European Union notes that the verdict now delivered comes at the end of a process in which Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was initially detained under the Internal Security Act, was seriously injured in police custody, and was throughout denied bail.
2. Since the beginning, the European Union, through attendance by its Missions in Kuala Lumpur, has been following continuously and with close attention the proceedings in this trial. The European Union notes that, although the trial was open and widely reported, on several occasions prominent members of the Malaysian Bar have expressed reservations about its conduct and the influence exerted by actions and statements by members of the executive over it. They have in particular voiced concern about the citing of lawyers for contempt of court and the summoning of lawyers by the police to give statements under the Criminal Procedure Code in relation to criminal cases that they are handling. Furthermore, the changing of the charges against Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in the midst of court proceedings gives rise to serious concern. It effectively deprived him of the opportunity to defend himself during this trial against allegations of immoral behaviour broadly and prominently reported in the Malaysian media over many months.
3. Therefore, the European Union strongly believes that a verdict reached in such circumstances raises doubts about the fairness of the trial. Considering that Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has already spent almost seven months in prison without benefit of bail, the European Union calls for the appeal process already announced by the defence lawyers to be carried out according to the accepted international standards of a fair trial.

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4. The European Union welcomes that the Royal Commission of Inquiry, which had been established to investigate the beating of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim while in police custody, has submitted its report and recommendations to the King on 6th April 1999 and that the report is to be published. The European Union trusts that appropriate legal measures will be taken against those who are responsible for this brutal mistreatment and that the incident will have a bearing on the present discussion in Malaysia about the reform of police work.
 5. The European Union will continue to keep this case under close scrutiny.
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