

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 Togo**

The European Union is gravely concerned at the deterioration in the political situation in Togo, which could impede the holding of democratic parliamentary elections as provided for under the Lomé Framework Agreement. The European Union emphasises that it attaches great importance to the freedom, openness and transparency of the electoral process.

The European Union calls upon President Eyadéma to free Maître Agboyibo, as he has undertaken to do. It also wants the leaders of all the parties to take part in the elections. The European Union also calls upon the Government to guarantee all political parties free access to the media, and to guarantee the members of all political parties freedom of movement throughout the country.

The European Union is aware that the President of the National Assembly wishes to amend the electoral code and change the Constitution. On the latter point, it was interested to note President Eyadéma's commitment, repeated on several occasions, to respect Article 59 of the Constitution limiting the number of Presidential terms. The European Union considers that to make unilateral amendments to the electoral code would be contrary to the spirit of the Lomé Framework Agreement, which was approved by all the political parties represented on the Joint Monitoring Committee (CPS).

The European Union notes the view of the United Nations that a period of four months is needed to complete administrative preparations for the elections. It notes also the decision of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) to postpone the date of the parliamentary elections and calls on CENI and the Government to set new dates for the elections within the next few days.

The European Union notes the United Nations's observation that the funding of the electoral process should be secured as soon as possible and calls on the Government of Togo to approve the electoral budget and transfer the appropriate funds to the CENI without delay.

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The European Union reiterates its support for the electoral process, provided that all candidates can participate freely in the elections, and confirms that EUR 1,56 million from the European Development Fund has been earmarked for that purpose. The European Union supports the United Nations recommendation that the request for technical assistance submitted by the CENI should be satisfied as soon as possible, and is prepared to supply such assistance once the Government of Togo so requests.

Lastly, the European Union calls on Togo to sign the Memorandum of Understanding required for the deployment of European electoral observers.

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.
