

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 occasion of the definitive establishment of the Temporary Security Zone
between Ethiopia and Eritrea**

The European Union welcomes the formal establishment of the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) on 18 April, as verified by the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE). The establishment of the TSZ is a crucial step in the continued implementation of the peace agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The European Union reiterates its strong support for the Peace Agreement signed in Algiers on 12 December 2000 as well as the Agreement of Cessation of Hostilities signed in Algiers on 18 June 2000.

The European Union reiterates its support for the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary General and calls on Ethiopia and Eritrea to cooperate fully with UNMEE in the implementation of its mandate. The Union calls on both parties to fulfil its commitment to the principle of freedom of movement for UNMEE in its area of operations, urgently establish a direct air corridor between Addis Ababa and Asmara and immediately release the remaining prisoners of war. The Union further calls on the parties to refrain from any kind of support to armed opposition groups that could threaten the Temporary Security Zone and UNMEE operations.

The European Union encourages the Governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea to move towards normalisation and lasting reconciliation.

Regional cooperation is of vital importance for a stable and sustainable development in the Horn of Africa. The European Union is committed to continue its support to the peace process as well as its assistance to the populations affected by the conflict. With continued progress in the peace process, the European Union wishes to support peace building, reconstruction and development and to contribute to bringing about a dialogue on confidence building measures and efforts towards normalisation, cooperation on all aspects of mutual interest and lasting reconciliation between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

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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.
