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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the eighth anniversary of the Iranian fatwa against Salman Rushdie**

On the eighth anniversary of the publication of the fatwa condemning the British author Salman Rushdie to death and calling for his assassination, the European Union recalls and repeats the solemn affirmations it made on the anniversaries of the fatwa according to which the fatwa, decided in defiance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the principle of the sovereignty of states, in particular regarding the protection by the latter of their nationals, remains null and void.

The European Union deeply regrets the announced increase in the bounty offered to his assassins by a private Iranian organization. Following statements made yesterday by President Rafsanjani, the European Union calls on the Iranian Government to take appropriate steps against any initiative that might endanger ongoing efforts to reach a solution.

The European Union also expresses grave concern over the continuing threats to the life of individuals associated with the work of Mr. Rushdie.

The European Union will continue to take advantage of its Critical Dialogue with Iran to defend fundamental rights and freedom of expression. Recalling the conclusions of the European Councils of Madrid in December 1995 and of Florence in June 1996, the European Union renews its demands that Iran abide by international law and calls upon the Iranian authorities to further efforts to obtain a satisfactory solution in respect of Salman Rushdie.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated country Cyprus, and the EFTA countries members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration.