

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
concerning Cyprus**

At the invitation of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and under his aegis, a first round of direct talks between the two communities of Cyprus is to be held near New York, from 8 to 13 July 1997. The European Union fully supports this United Nations initiative.

It calls on the Cypriot parties to enter into these talks in a spirit of openness. It hopes that the talks will enable the parties to engage in a genuine negotiating process. It calls on all the other parties involved to bring all their influence to bear to enable progress to be made towards a negotiated, just and lasting solution in Cyprus.

For its part, the Union, together with the other members of the international community, will do everything within its power to achieve a positive outcome to these direct talks, with an eye in particular to the prospective opening of the process for its enlargement.