

**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 peace process in Colombia**

The European Union expresses its deep concern at the deterioration of the armed conflict in Colombia and the increasing suffering of the civilian population. The European Union is convinced that the conflict can only be resolved by a negotiated settlement.

The European Union therefore urges the FARC to immediately resume negotiations in order to achieve concrete results in the peace process. To facilitate the resumption of the peace talks, the Union appeals to the Government of Colombia to prolong the demilitarised zone.

The European Union notes the efforts undertaken by the Colombian Government to reduce the activities of the paramilitary groups. It underlines that further steps should be pursued in order to curb these activities and urges the Colombian Government to take the necessary measures.

The European Union welcomes the announcement of a preliminary agreement between the Colombian Government and the ELN. It reaffirms its support to these peace negotiations and encourages both parts to conclude a final agreement.

The European Union strongly condemns the persistent grave violations and human rights abuses in Colombia. The European Union calls on all parties to the conflict to put an end to violence, to respect human rights and comply with international humanitarian law.

The European Union calls on all armed groups holding hostages to immediately release them. In this connection, the European Union welcomes the release by ELN of captured policemen and members of the military, and appeals to the FARC to fulfil their announcement to release a number of military and police captives.

The European Union reiterates its willingness to support a sustainable peaceful solution to the conflict in Colombia.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration.

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