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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
concerning the mounting violence in Colombia**

The European Union wishes to express its deep concern at the mounting violence in Colombia, befalling foreign aid workers, international officials and Colombian citizens involved in the search for peace and in assisting the civilian population.

The holding up of a UN vehicle and abduction of one of its occupants and the abduction of three German aid workers are the latest in a long line of other unlawful detentions of EU nationals and killings of foreign nationals, journalists and many Colombian citizens.

These incidents seriously jeopardise the peace process and openly flout elementary principles of international law.

They seriously compromise the international community's support for Colombia's peace process, hamper the facilitator countries' role and place unnecessary obstacles in the way of implementation of the European Union support programme announced in Brussels on 30 April 2001 and of bilateral cooperation projects.

Such acts, moreover, serve only to strengthen the hand of those opposed to peace.

The European Union urgently appeals for all hostages to be released without delay and for their physical integrity to be respected.

The European Union furthermore calls on all parties concerned to renounce all forms of violence and to commit themselves to resolving their differences through positive, constructive dialogue.

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.

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