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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the humanitarian situation in Ituri and the serious violations of human rights**

The European Union wishes to express its grave concern at the humanitarian situation in Ituri and the serious violations of human rights.

It asks all parties to facilitate humanitarian access to the populations affected by the conflict and to respect the neutrality and independence of humanitarian workers while guaranteeing their safety.

The European Union strongly condemns the continuing military activity by armed militia which are exploiting a local inter-ethnic conflict for political and economic reasons.

The European Union calls on all parties to cooperate fully in order to set up the Ituri Pacification Commission. Furthermore, the EU calls upon the Governments of the DRC and Uganda to use all their influence to bring an end to the tension and to work towards ensuring that conditions exist in Ituri which will allow the Luanda Agreement to be successfully implemented. In this connection, the EU takes note of Uganda's commitment under the Luanda Agreement to complete the withdrawal of its forces no later than 15 December 2002. The EU also calls upon all other states in the region to contribute equally to peace and stability in this region.

The EU asks the United Nations to continue to monitor the situation in Ituri closely and to make, if necessary, the appropriate adjustments to MONUC's mandate in the light of the current crisis.

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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