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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the events of the last few days at the border between the Democratic Republic of the Congo
and the Republic of Rwanda**

The EU expresses grave concern at recent reports of an attack apparently led by the Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda (FDLR) on Rwandan territory and of an incident involving Rwandan troops said to have taken place on the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The EU wishes to point out that the presence of any foreign troops from any country whatsoever on the territory of the DRC is a violation of international law and an attack on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The EU believes that the United Nations Organisation Mission in the Congo (MONUC) should intervene actively as a matter of urgency in order to counter any attempt on the part of the FDLR to infiltrate Rwandan territory, with a view to establishing real stability in the east of the DRC.

The EU condemns equally strongly the restrictions placed on the free movement through Congolese territory of soldiers of the MONUC which prevent them from fulfilling their mission.

The potential seriousness of the situation in the east of the DRC compels the EU to call on the Congolese and Rwandan governments to hold direct consultations to prevent any aggravation of the tension and to intensify their efforts to improve relations between the two countries.

The EU makes a fresh appeal for the highest authorities in Kigali and in Kinshasa to respect scrupulously the spirit of the declaration on good-neighbourly relations which they both signed on 25 September 2003, as well as the Pretoria Agreement of 30 July 2002 and the commitments which they both entered into at the Pretoria meeting on 27 November 2003.

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In particular, the EU would support the establishment by the two countries of a bilateral mechanism for monitoring the border area, backed by the MONUC. In that connection, the disarmament and demobilisation of the former Rwandan armed forces and Interahamwe combatants are essential in order to resolve the conflict in the region.

The Candidate Countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this declaration.
