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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the massacres in the province of Ituri in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

The European Union firmly condemns the renewed massacres in Ituri on Monday 6 October 2003, in the village of Katchele. These events, which add to the enormous suffering already sustained by the local populations, demonstrate the persistence of elements opposing the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, despite the progress made in recent months.

The European Union confirms its very strong support for the peace process and its determination to ensure that the perpetrators of these massacres do not go unpunished. In this connection, the EU notes the decision of the International Criminal Court to examine the investigations into the events in Ituri.

The European Union calls on the States in the region to cooperate fully with the transitional government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in its task of restoring order and the authority of the State throughout the territory, and in its eastern provinces in particular. The EU attaches great importance to the strict observance of Security Council Resolution 1493 (2003) which, inter alia, invites all States to take the necessary measures to prevent the direct or indirect supply of arms to armed groups operating in the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo which are not party to the Global and All-inclusive agreement.

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The European Union encourages MONUC to continue its peace-keeping efforts in Ituri, in the wake of Operation Artemis, and notes with satisfaction the full deployment of the Ituri Brigade.

The Acceding Countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia, the Associated Countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey and the EFTA countries, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this declaration.
