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**DECLARATION OF THE PRESIDENCY ON BEHALF OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION ON THE INAUGURATION OF
PRESIDENT ANDRES PASTRANA ARANGO**

The European Union congratulates His Excellency Andres Pastrana Arango on the occasion of his inauguration as Constitutional President of the Republic of Colombia, and offers its most sincere wishes for the success of his high mission in charge of the country, for his personal well-being and that of the Colombian People.

Time and again, the People of Colombia have clearly and overwhelmingly expressed their desire to find a negotiated solution to a conflict which has touched every family in Colombia, often tragically. The new President, democratically elected by the Colombian people, has expressed his political will to open the way towards peace, in fulfilment of his commitment to national reconciliation. The European Union salutes these initiatives for dialogue, supports their consolidation, and trusts that new and viable solutions may be found to lead towards a lasting and meaningful settlement to the conflict.

The European Union will devote its greatest efforts to support a peace process based on fundamental respect for human rights and basic freedoms, and is willing to provide its support and assistance in the most appropriate ways.

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