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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union  
on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea**

The Presidency will lead a technical mission to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) from 9-16 May to assess the economic situation in the DPRK and as part of Member States' preparations for the UNDP Round-Table, to be held in Geneva on 28-29 May.

The United Kingdom, as Presidency, takes this opportunity to reaffirm the European Union's support for the Four-Party Talks process and bilateral talks between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which it regards as mutually reinforcing. We welcome the very positive steps taken by President Kim Dae-jung since his election.

We have also taken note of the letter from the Secretary General of the Workers' Party of Korea, Kim Jong-il of 18 April calling for dialogue and confidence-building. We call for continued contact and co-operation between the two nations. The European Union believes that real progress towards peace and stability on the peninsula could make a substantial contribution to tackling the longer-term factors underlying the DPRK's food shortages.

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Cyprus, associated to the European Union, the EFTA countries Iceland and Norway members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration.