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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on East Timor : New York agreement**

The European Union warmly welcomes the signing on 5 May 1999 in New York by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Foreign Ministers of Portugal and Indonesia of the agreement on the future of East Timor. This agreement, based on the right to self-determination, will lead to a popular consultation of the East Timorese people on whether they would accept or reject the proposed constitutional framework for autonomy, in the latter case leading to the independence of East Timor. This constitutes a major breakthrough on the path of solving a long outstanding issue. In this context, the immediate release of Xanana Gusmao is an essential factor towards the success of the consultation process. The EU commends the sustained efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to find a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to the question of East Timor.

Security in East Timor remains crucial for the holding of a free and fair ballot on 8 August 1999 and for an orderly and peaceful transition in East Timor. The EU once again calls on all sides to show utmost restraint and refrain from any resort to violence. It reiterates its view that it remains the obligation of the Indonesian government and its security forces to uphold peace and guarantee security for everybody in East Timor.
