

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the Decision of President Clerides concerning missiles**

The European Union welcomes the decision taken by Cypriot President Glafkos Clerides on 29 December not to bring S-300 missiles to the island. This decision has eliminated a source of tension on the island and should encourage progress towards a just and lasting settlement of the Cyprus conflict. It should be followed by gestures also from Turkish side.

The European Union considers President Clerides' decision to be an important signal for the reduction of the excessively high level of armaments in Cyprus and hopes that further steps in this direction will be taken by both sides.

The European Union strongly endorses Resolutions 1217 and 1218 passed by the UN Security Council on 22 December and fully supports the ongoing efforts of the UN Secretary-General's Deputy Special Representative for Cyprus.

The European Union is of the view that President Clerides' decision constitutes a positive development also in the perspective of Cyprus' EU-accession. It shows that the increasingly strong ties between Cyprus and the European Union are able to contribute to the reduction of tensions and to the search for a political solution. The EU will continue to work in accordance with the conclusions of the European Council of Luxembourg for the involvement of representatives of the Turkish-Cypriot community in the EU accession negotiations.

The European Union calls on all parties to continue to co-operate with the UN Secretary-General with a view to reaching a comprehensive and lasting settlement on Cyprus in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions.

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