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**STABILISATION AND ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT
BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND
THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

At a ceremony held in Luxembourg on 9 April 2001, the European Community and its Member States and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia signed a Stabilisation and Association Agreement.

For the European Union, signed by:

- Ms Anna LINDH, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, President of the Council
- Mr Christopher PATTEN, Member of the European Commission

as well as on behalf of the Member States, their Foreign Ministers (see Annex)

For the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, signed by:

- Mr Ljubco GEORGIEVSKI, President of the Government

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The President of the Council and Commissioner Patten on behalf of the Community and Prime Minister Georgievski on behalf of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia also signed the Interim Agreement on trade and trade-related matters.

In their statements made on the occasion of the signature, the representatives of the European Union and Prime Minister Georgievski underlined the historical character of this event as the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is the first country of the Region to have successfully concluded negotiations on and signed such an Agreement with the EU. The EU leaders also encouraged all political and ethnic parties in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, of whom many were present at the signing ceremony, to use the new Agreement as a window of opportunity for enhanced inter-ethnic co-operation.

The political significance of the Agreement is high. The preamble reflects the fact that the European Council has given an EU perspective to the countries in South-East Europe covered by the EU's Stabilisation and Association Process. It recalls "the European Union's readiness to integrate to the fullest possible extent the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia into the political and economic mainstream of Europe and its status as candidate for EU membership ... subject to successful implementation of this Agreement, notably regarding regional co-operation."

Negotiations between the European Union and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia started in Skopje on 5 March 2000 and following three rounds of negotiations the SAA was initialled in the margins of the Zagreb Summit on 24 November 2000. The Agreement, which will considerably upgrade relations between the European Union and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, focuses on the following main elements:

- The establishment of an association between the European Community and its Member States, on one side, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, on the other, within a transitional period of a maximum of ten years.

- The respect of international peace and stability, the development of good neighbourly relations, democratic principles and human rights, minority rights, international law principles and the rule of law.
- The reinforcement of political dialogue with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
- Provisions on enhanced regional co-operation, including the perspective of establishing free-trade areas between the countries of the region;
- The perspective of the establishment of a free-trade area between the Community and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia within ten years after the entry into force of the Agreement;
- Provisions on the movement of workers, freedom of establishment, supply of services, current payments and movement of capital;
- The commitment by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to approximate its legislation to that of the EC, notably in key areas of the internal market;
- Provisions on co-operation with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in a wide range of fields, including justice and home affairs;
- Provision of the establishment of an Association and Stabilisation Council that supervises the implementation of the agreement, of a Stabilisation and Association Committee and of an Association and Stabilisation Parliamentary Committee.

The Interim Agreement between the EC and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, also signed today, is foreseen to enter into force on 1 June, and will allow the trade and trade-related matters to become applicable, pending the entry into force of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement. This agreement will replace the trade provisions of the existing Co-operation Agreement. However, the more favourable trade concessions, granted autonomously by the EC last year will continue to apply in parallel.

Belgium :

Mr Louis MICHEL

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs

Denmark :

Mr Mogens LYKKETOFT

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Germany :

Mr Joschka FISCHER

Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs and Deputy Federal Chancellor

Greece :

Mr George PAPANDREOU

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Spain :

Mr Josep PIQUÉ I CAMPS

Minister for Foreign Affairs

France :

Mr Hubert VEDRINE

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ireland :

Mr Brian COWEN

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Italy :

Mr Umberto RANIERI

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Luxembourg :

Ms Lydie POLFER

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

Netherlands :

Mr Jozias VAN AARTSEN

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Austria :

Ms Benita FERRERO-WALDNER

Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs

Portugal :

Mr Jaime GAMA

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Finland :

Mr Erkki TUOMIOJA

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Sweden :

Ms Anna LINDH

Minister for Foreign Affairs

United-Kingdom :

Mr Robin COOK

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs