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EU RESPONSE TO THE STATEMENT BY THE GUUAM COUNTRIES

The European Union thanks the delegation of Azerbaijan for briefing the Permanent Council on the results of the GUUAM Summit held in Chisinau on 22 April 2005.

The EU welcomes the commitment by the GUUAM countries to the development of democratic processes, the strengthening of civil society and the rule of law as a means of consolidating peace, security, stability and sustainable development and also with a view to promoting conflict settlement based on norms and principles of international law. We underline the significance of regional cooperation in promoting democracy and development. The EU takes note of the Chisinau Declaration "*In the Name of Democracy, Stability and Development*" and the Joint Statement "*Building Democracy from the Baltic to the Black Sea*".

The EU welcomes the intentions of the GUUAM countries to intensify their interaction with the EU, other international organizations and other countries, including in the region. The EU looks forward to developing closer relationships with the GUUAM countries, in particular within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania and the Candidate Countries Turkey and Croatia¹ align themselves with this statement.

¹Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process