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PRESS INFORMATION

**Javier SOLANA,
EU High Representative for CFSP,
on a visit to South Africa
and to the Democratic Republic of Congo**

29- 30 April 2005

Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) will be visiting South Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) on Friday 29 and Saturday 30 April 2005. These visits will take place within the framework of efforts to strengthen political dialogue and to develop relations based on increased solidarity with the African continent.

In Pretoria, on Friday 29 April, Javier Solana will be welcomed by the President of the Republic, Mr. Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Clarice Dlamini Zuma, and the Minister of Defence, Mr. Mosiuoa Gérard Patrick Lekota.

Together, they will work towards strengthening the dialogue and strategic partnership between the European Union and South Africa. Discussions will therefore focus on general issues of mutual interest (in particular the United Nations and African Union) as well as on different topical Africa-related issues (Great Lakes, Sudan, Ivory Coast, Zimbabwe).

The High Representative will also seize the opportunity of this visit to meet representatives of leading South African security and research institutes.

In Kinshasa, on Saturday 30 April, Javier Solana will be welcomed by President Joseph Kabila as well as by Vice-Presidents Bemba and Ruberwa and the Chairmen of the National Assembly and of

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the Senate, Messrs. Kamitatu and Marini Bodo. He will attend the launching of the European police mission EUPOL. Meetings are also foreseen with the Ministers of Defence and of the Interior. Javier Solana will also meet Mr. William L. Swing, the United Nations Secretary-General Special Representative and Head of Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

During his visit, the High Representative will be accompanied by the Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Assistance, Mr. Louis Michel. This joint visit to Kinshasa is aimed at evaluating progress in the transition process of DRC, of which the European Union, alongside the United Nations, is the principal sponsor.

Javier Solana will emphasise to his various interlocutors that there is no alternative other than the transition process. The completion of this process will remain subject to a sincere and determined commitment by all Congolese stakeholders. All need to work towards achieving free and democratic elections as foreseen in the peace agreements of 2002.

For its part, the European Union plans to intensify its efforts and to support the success of Congolese transition. In this context, Javier Solana will launch, in Kinshasa, a new European police mission, EUPOL and will announce the forthcoming EUSEC advisory mission on security reform.

These two new missions are in line with the Artemis operation, successfully launched in Ituri in 2003. They help to illustrate the determination of the European Union to contribute to the stability of the Democratic Republic of Congo, which ultimately has a bearing on that of the Great Lakes region as a whole.
