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**STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENCY ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
ON THE OCCASION OF THE PUBLICATION OF THE ANGLO - IRISH FRAMEWORK
DOCUMENT ON NORTHERN IRELAND**

"The European Union welcomes the publication of the Anglo-Irish Framework Document, which lays the foundations for negotiations between the various parties involved in the Northern Ireland issue.

The drawing up of that document marks a significant step in the peace process and confirms the movement initiated by the Anglo-Irish Declaration in December 1993.

The European Union wishes at this time to reaffirm its full support for the efforts being made by the United Kingdom and Irish Governments for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. It points to the Community aid programme recently agreed on in principle to promote economic development in Northern Ireland and in the bordering counties in the South and welcomes the efforts undertaken in this way to assist the peace process."