

– *Cyprus - Council conclusions*

Over lunch, Ministers held an exchange of views on the situation in Cyprus following the referendum on the United Nations settlement plan on 24 April.

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council noted the results of the referenda in Cyprus on 24 April 2004 and expressed its strong regret that the accession to the EU of a united Cyprus will not now be possible on 1 May. The Council expressed its deep appreciation for the determined and sustained efforts of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and his colleagues in the search for a comprehensive solution of the Cyprus problem. The Council also welcomed the contribution made by Greece and Turkey. It expressed its determination to ensure that the people of Cyprus will soon achieve their shared destiny as citizens of a united Cyprus in the European Union.

The Turkish Cypriot community have expressed their clear desire for a future within the European Union. The Council is determined to put an end to the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community and to facilitate the reunification of Cyprus by encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community. The Council invited the Commission to bring forward comprehensive proposals to this end, with particular emphasis on the economic integration of the island and on improving contact between the two communities and with the EU. The Council recommended that the 259 million euro already earmarked for the northern part of Cyprus in the event of a settlement now be used for this purpose.

The Council asked Coreper to expedite discussion on the Regulation on a regime under Article 2 of Protocol 10 of the Act of Accession with a view to its adoption before 1 May, taking due account of the Council's desire to send a signal of encouragement to the Turkish Cypriot community that its future rests in a united Cyprus within the European Union."