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Special Council meeting
– **JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS** –
Luxembourg, 7 April 1999

President: **Mr Otto SCHILY**
Minister for the Interior
of the Federal Republic of Germany

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The Governments of the Member States and the European Commission were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Luc van den BOSSCHE

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Interior

Denmark:

Mr Thorkild SIMONSEN

Minister for the Interior

Germany:

Mr Otto SCHILY

Federal Minister for the Interior

Mr Claus Henning SCHAPPER

State Secretary, Federal Ministry of the Interior

Greece:

Mr Michalis CHRYSOCHOIDIS

Minister for Public Order

Spain:

Mr Jaime MAYOR OREJA

Minister for the Interior

France:

Mr Jean-Jack QUEYRANNE

State Secretary to the Minister for the Interior, with responsibility for Overseas Territories

Ireland:

Mr John O'DONOGHUE

Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform

Italy:

Ms Rosa Russo JERVOLINO

Minister for the Interior

Luxembourg:

Mr Luc FRIEDEN

Minister for Justice, Minister for the Budget, Minister for Relations with the Parliament

Netherlands:

Mr Benk KORTHALS

Minister for Justice

Mr Abraham PEPPER

Minister for the Interior and Overseas Territories

Austria:

Mr Karl SCHLÖGL

Federal Minister for the Interior

Portugal:

Mr Jorge COELHO

Minister for the Interior

Finland:

Mr Jan-Erik ENESTAM

Minister for the Interior

Sweden:

Mr Pierre SCHORI

Minister for International Development Cooperation, with responsibility for Migration and Immigration Policy and Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs

United Kingdom:

Mr Jack STRAW

Home Secretary

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Commission:

Ms Anita GRADIN

Member

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KOSOVO - Presidency conclusions

1. The Council agrees that people displaced from Kosovo are in need of effective protection. It is unanimous that such protection should be provided as extensively as possible within the region.

Temporary accommodation of displaced persons within the region makes life easier for people in unfamiliar surroundings as a result of cultural and linguistic affinities, while also facilitating their subsequent return home. Long-term admission of Kosovars to countries outside the region, on the other hand, would consolidate their displacement from their homes. That would send the wrong signal to the Serbian regime, on which all forms of pressure must be stepped up to put a stop to displacement of people from Kosovo and make it possible for them to return in safety.

2. The Union welcomes the readiness of individual Member States and the European Community to provide assistance on the ground. The Council (General Affairs) will endeavour to ensure that the aid required to alleviate the needs of displaced persons in the region is provided quickly and without bureaucracy and that aid is distributed as effectively as possible as a result of adequate coordination.

The Council expressed its appreciation for the assistance already provided by the EC Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and for the further efforts undertaken by the Commission to reinforce Community aid in the region.

3. The Union thanks Albania for its readiness to take in a further 100 000 displaced Kosovars currently in FYROM. EU Member States will assist Albania in that humanitarian operation as required. This would reduce for the time being the need to create settlement possibilities outside the region.

4. The Council recognises that, with numbers of displaced persons swelling daily, it might, for humanitarian reasons and to avoid destabilising individual host countries in the region of origin, prove necessary in the future to afford displaced persons protection and assistance outside their region of origin on a temporary basis.

Any such humanitarian evacuations out of neighbouring area must be based on the voluntary choice of the refugees to be temporarily relocated. In this context, the principle of family unity should also be applied.

5. The Council requests UNHCR to provide precise and regular information on the evolution of the refugees situation, including registration, and to make the necessary recommendations.
6. It further invites the Commission to come forward with a proposal which would enable financial assistance to be provided from the Community budget, if needed, to those Member States which agree to accept refugees from the conflict region.