Statement by
Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for CFSP,
on the occasion of the ceremony marking the end of the EU Police Mission in the
former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Skopje, 9 December 2005

A ceremony marking the end of the EU Police Mission in the former Yugoslav Republic of
Macedonia, EUPOL PROXIMA, was held today in Skopje. The mission was launched on 15
December 2003. On the occasion of the ceremony, the following message was read on behalf of EU
High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana.

• "It is an important day today. Both for the EU and for this country. In partnership and through
competent work of people on both sides, for two years, PROXIMA has been instrumental in
supporting the further development of a police service based on European standards. It has not
always been an easy task, but it has been a necessary one, and together you have made progress
in a number of key areas that has improved public confidence in the police.

• I want to express my personal gratitude towards Head of Mission Juergen SCHOLZ and all
mission members and local staff. Because of your dedication, hard work and close cooperation
with local policemen and women we have been able to reach the results we had hoped for and
contribute to improving the performance of the police service in this country.

• In light of the progress made time has come to end the presence of PROXIMA and the presence
of EU Crisis Management Missions under the European Security and Defence Policy. The
European Union's relationship with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is therefore
moving from post-crisis stabilisation to pre-accession integration.

• However, the end of PROXIMA is not the end of the EU support to the broader Rule of Law
area in this country. We will continue our efforts by the establishment of the EU Police
Advisory Team (EUPAT) that will assist our local counterparts in the police reform efforts from
15 December and for the six months ahead. EUPAT will then hand over to a European
Commission local implementation support project that will provide you with police advisors at
central and local level.

• I think this evolution shows how far the country has come. It also illustrates the EU's ability to
adapt its different tools to specific situations, with specific needs. We began by taking over a
military operation, continued with an ESDP police mission, the ending of which we mark today,
and will follow up with EUPAT and the European Commission projects.

• I will finish here by expressing to the men and women of PROXIMA my sincere thanks for the
work done and by extending my best wishes to all of you for the holiday season and for the time
ahead.