

Brussels, 12 November 2002

Pat COX hails "Historic and ground-breaking initiative" of Kofi ANNAN's peace plan for Cyprus

Pat COX, President of the European Parliament, will be visiting Romania on 12 and 13 November 2002. The visit is part of a series of official visits Mr Cox has been making to Candidate Countries in the run up to the Copenhagen Summit.

Kofi Annan's peace plan is an historic and ground-breaking initiative. He has provided the people of Cyprus with a once-in-a-generation opportunity for a comprehensive settlement, and the best chance after decades of deadlock both for reunification and for enabling a united Cyprus to join the EU.

It is now up to the leaders of both communities to seize this unique opportunity. It will require every ounce of the considerable reserves of wisdom and political and moral courage of which Mr Clerides and Mr Denktash should be capable. After a lifetime of service to their respective communities, I do not doubt that they will rise to the task: they can count on the full support of the European Parliament.

We must pull out all the stops to maximise the chances of a settlement before Copenhagen.