

Strasbourg, 12 March 2003

**Statement by Pat COX on the inauguration of the International Criminal Court**

Speaking in the European Parliament in Strasbourg today, Pat Cox made the following statement:

"Today in The Hague delegates from the 89 International Criminal Court member nations will gather for a ceremony presided over by Kofi Annan and Queen Beatrix. The Court's 18 judges will be sworn in and the court will be inaugurated. It is expected that Prime Ministers, Presidents, Foreign and Justice ministers of the member nations will attend."

"In the clearest way we (in the European Parliament) have promoted and defended human rights in supporting an International Criminal Court as a vital step forward at the global level. I am proud, as President of the European Parliament, that we think that an International Criminal Court is better than a Guantanamo Bay for those who have offended the international human rights order."

"The House will recall that the European Parliament adopted resolutions on the ICC on 24 October and 26 September last year calling for the US to change its position on the Court."