

BUILDING DEMOCRACY FROM THE BALTIC TO THE BLACK SEA

Joint Statement by the Heads of State of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Lithuania, Moldova, Romania and Ukraine

The Heads of State of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Lithuania, Moldova, Romania and Ukraine,

Having gathered in Chisinau on 22 April 2005 to discuss issues of regional and European importance,

Welcoming the conclusion of Accession Agreements with Romania and Bulgaria set for 24 April 2005,

Noting the positive impact of the enlargement of the European Union on stability and cooperation in both Black and the Baltic Sea regions,

Acknowledging the significance of regional cooperation formats, such as trilateral Baltic institutions, Visegrad Group, Vilnius Process, and South East European Cooperation Process to the success of European integration,

Underscoring the fundamental importance of recent democratic changes in our region,

Understanding the importance of European identity and perspective for Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine and the other nations in the region,

Supporting the efforts of these countries to seek closer integration with European structures.

Committed to working toward a closer and integrated Europe from the Baltic to the Black Sea.

Hopeful of further consolidation of democratic values in broader areas,

Building on the shared values of democracy, solidarity and regional cooperation, and on the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity,

Declare:

1. Democratic values lie at the core of European identity and integration. We extend our commitment to freedom, democracy, human rights and good governance to all of the region, and develop policies that promote and protect these fundamental values throughout Europe and its adjacent areas. Recent developments in our region signal the strengthening of democracy in Europe. This historical momentum brings up new tasks for Europe as a whole and for the region in particular.

2. The European project has yet to be accomplished. New democracies in Eastern Europe demonstrate an impressive record of change and develop quickly to democratic standards. We share the view that the prospect of European integration is the most powerful instrument of consolidating democratic reforms in the region. No European democracy should be excluded from European integration. We will seek to maintain the doors of the European Union and NATO open, each contributing in our own realms.

3. We view the European Neighborhood Policy as one of the effective mechanisms to support national policies of integration with the European Union. We welcome the conclusion of EU Action* Plans within the ENP framework with Moldova and Ukraine and look forward to extending ENP Action Plans to the Southern Caucasus. We also stress the necessity to develop the existing instruments of interaction so that legitimate expectations of the new European democracies would be fulfilled. Further facilitation of trade and travel across the EU border, and in the region would be a welcome step Toward this goal.

4. We pledge to support the initiatives aimed at promoting regional cooperation and to work closely with each other to advance European integration. We consider use and development of the existing regional structures, as well as the creation of new ones, as an important element of the European Neighborhood Policy, helping to coordinate national policies and increase the efficiency of integration efforts.

5. We will increase efforts in drafting and implementing common regional and transborder projects related to such fields as infrastructure, transit, energy cooperation, communication, technologies, and human exchange. The expansion of people-to-people network in the region is the ultimate target of all Parties involved.

6. We will seek to further contribute to European cooperation by pursuing policies coherent with broader European interests. Our goal is to promote Europe, which would be an equal, effective and reliable partner in the face of the 21st century security challenges.

7. We believe that ongoing democratic processes in our region will have a positive impact on developments in Belarus and agree to assist democratization process in this country. We will help in development and strengthening of the Belarusian civil society.

8. We underline the importance of intensifying the concerted efforts of the international community in resolution of existing conflicts in the region of GUUAM states on the basis of the norms and principles of the international law.

9. We agree that cooperation with the Russian Federation is an important factor in ensuring security and stability on the European continent. We are determined to further develop constructive and friendly relations with Russia thus contributing to the ongoing dialogue between Russia and the European structures. We believe that our consolidation as successful European democracies plays a positive role in development of democracy in the region.

10. We resolve to take steps to continue the process set out by this *Joint Statement*, including close consultations on integration performance, and to set regional goals.