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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the release of prisoners in Cuba**

The European Union appreciates the welcome extended by Cuba to Pope John Paul and views this as a positive step in the development of religious freedom there. The Union also welcomes the Cuban government decision to release immediately a certain number of prisoners in response to the Pope's appeal, and urges the authorities to liberate and fully reintegrate into society all who have been imprisoned because of peaceful expression of their political views, including the four leading members of the Internal Dissidence Working Group. The Union considers both the visit and the release of prisoners as positive steps towards greater religious and civic freedom in Cuba, and looks for this process to continue.
