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Release of Clara Rojas and Consuelo Gonzalez must be followed by release of all hostages in Colombia

The EGP calls on the EU to press for a political solution to end conflict in Colombia and secure the release of all hostages and political prisoners

Commenting on the release yesterday of Clara Rojas and Consuelo Gonzalez who had been held hostage by the FARC guerrilla, **EGP Co-Spokesperson Ulrike Lunacek** said: "We European Greens are delighted that FARC have finally released Clara Rojas and Consuelo Gonzalez, more than three weeks after it was announced that they would be set free. We hope that Clara Rojas can soon be reunited with her son Emmanuel who was born in captivity and who Clara hasn't seen since June 2005. However, this release must be the start of a process which will result in the speedy release of all hostages being held, including Ingrid Betancourt, the former Presidential candidate for the Colombian Green Party. We once again call on FARC to immediately release all hostages."

EGP Co-Spokesperson Philippe Lamberts continued: "We would like to express our appreciation for the mediation efforts carried out by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and the Colombian Senator, Piedad Cordoba. We also call on EU representatives, in particular Javier Solana, the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy and Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the Commissioner for External Relations, to urge the Colombian government of President Alvaro Uribe to move ahead with plans to create a limited demilitarised zone where negotiations between the government and FARC can be held. The EGP has always argued that this conflict, which has caused so many deaths and brought so much suffering to the Colombian people, will only be ended through a humanitarian agreement and political solution. We hope that the Colombian government now realises that there can be no military solution to its conflict with FARC."



NOTE FOR EDITORS: Ingrid Betancourt, the leader of the Colombian Green Party (Partido Verde-Oxigeno) and a former presidential candidate, was abducted alongside her campaign manager and running mate Clara Rojas by FARC in February 2002. . More information about Ingrid Betancourt, in several languages, can be found at www.betancourt.info. Consuelo Gonzalez de Perdomo is a former Liberal Party Congresswoman.
