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Statements by Steve Ballmer Regarding End of European Commission Settlement Negotiations

BRUSSELS, Belgium -- March 18, 2004 -- The following soundbites were recorded today by Steve Ballmer, chief executive officer of Microsoft Corporation, in response to the end of settlement negotiations between Microsoft and the European Commission:

"I believe Microsoft and European Commission reached agreement on the issues of the case; but we were unable to agree on principles for new issues that could arise in the future."

"I believe negotiations between Microsoft and the European Commission broke down because we were unable to agree on a set of consumer driven principles on issues that might arise in the future. I think we did a good job of putting forward proposals that the Commission thought were valuable to resolve the current issues in the case but these forward looking issues proved intractable."

"As the legal case between Microsoft and the European Commission moves forward, we will work even harder at Microsoft to extend our relationships with European governments. The challenges of security, privacy, IT skills development and education are very much at the center of an ongoing dialogue and relationship that we must nurture with governments throughout Europe."

"Microsoft worked very hard to try to resolve these issues without litigation. Because of the tremendous value Microsoft attaches with our

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relationships with governments all across Europe, we made every possible effort to settle this case and I hope that perhaps that we can still settle this case at a later stage."

"These discussions between Microsoft and the European Commission were carried out in a cooperative spirit and with professionalism on both sides."

"Microsoft will continue to maintain strong customer relationships and we'll continue to work closely with European governments on a wide range of issues including security, privacy, education and IT skills development even as these legal issues move forward."

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