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Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the formal abolition of the death penalty in the State of New Jersey, USA

I would like to draw the attention of participating States to the following Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the formal abolition of the death penalty in the State of New Jersey, USA, issued on the 17th December 2007. The Declaration reads as follows:

Begin quote «The European Union warmly welcomes today's signing of bill S-171 by Governor Jon Corzine. His signature, passing the bill into law, heralds the abolition of the death penalty in the State of New Jersey.

The European Union believes that elimination of the death penalty is fundamental to the protection of human dignity, and to the progressive development of human rights.

The European Union is unreservedly opposed to the use of the death penalty under all circumstances and has consistently called for the universal abolition of this punishment.

There is no evidence to suggest that the use of the death penalty serves as a deterrent against violent crime and the irreversibility of the punishment means that miscarriages of justice - which are inevitable in all

legal systems - cannot be redressed. Consequently, the death penalty has been abolished throughout the European Union.» *end of quote*

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

*Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.