

Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

**Permanent Council No. 611
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EU statement on the Death Penalty in the USA

1. The EU reiterates its longstanding and firm opposition to the death penalty in all cases.
2. We remain particularly concerned by the imposition of the death penalty in cases of persons suffering from mental or intellectual disabilities. We consider this practise contrary to widely accepted human rights norms and urge states not to impose the death penalty in such cases.
3. The EU is deeply concerned therefore that Mr. Percy Levar Walton, who has been diagnosed as psychotic and suffering from a severe form of schizophrenia and mental retardation, is scheduled to be executed in the State of Virginia on 8 June 2006. The EU raised Mr. Walton's case in May 2003 both in Virginia and in the OSCE Permanent Council and subsequently welcomed the granting of a stay of execution. We now reiterate our appeal to the competent authorities in the State of Virginia to grant Mr. Walton relief from his death penalty.
4. On 9 February this year the EU raised the case of Mr. Steven Staley who suffers from paranoid schizophrenia and who was to be executed in the State of Texas. The EU would like to use this opportunity to welcome the fact that the state district court judge has withdrawn the execution date for Mr. Staley, finding him incompetent to be executed owing to his mental illness.
5. The EU trusts that the appropriate State authorities will be made aware of this statement.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, 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, Serbia and Montenegro, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

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