



PC.DEL/886/12
11 October 2012

EUROPEAN UNION

ENGLISH only

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 925
Vienna, 11 October 2012**

**EU statement on the occasion of the European and World Day
against the Death Penalty, 10 October**

On the occasion of the European and World Day against the Death Penalty yesterday, 10 October 2012, the EU would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the joint Declaration by Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and Catherine Ashton, European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, issued on 10 October, in which they stated:

“Capital punishment is inhumane and unnecessary. Experience has also shown that it does not serve as a deterrent to crime. No legal system is flawless; any miscarriage of justice could lead to the tragic loss of an innocent life.

Abolition of the death penalty throughout Europe, and beyond, is an objective common to all our member states. No execution has taken place in our member states in the last fifteen years.

The European Union and the Council of Europe encourage all European States which have not yet abolished the death penalty *de jure* under all circumstances, to do so by ratifying the relevant protocols to the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Council of Europe and the European Union urge Belarus, the only European country which still executes people, to introduce a moratorium with a view to complete abolition.

We welcome the abolitionist trend worldwide, and note the ever decreasing number of countries applying capital punishment. On the other hand, we are concerned about the sharp increase in executions during the past twelve months in some of those countries which still apply and implement the death penalty.

The European Union and the Council of Europe urge all countries which still retain the death penalty to immediately apply a moratorium on executions as a first step towards abolition. Moreover, we call on all countries to support the Resolution on a global moratorium on the use of the death penalty, which will be put to a vote at the 67th session of the United Nations General Assembly in December 2012.

The Council of Europe and the European Union reaffirm their commitment to continue their persistent efforts to promote abolition in Europe and throughout the world.”

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

Andorra and San Marino also align themselves with this declaration.

Mr Chairperson,

Taking this opportunity, the EU would also like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the statement by EU High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on planned executions in South Dakota, issued on 9 October, in which she stated:

“I wish to express my concern regarding information that the authorities in the US State of South Dakota intend to carry out two executions: Mr Eric Robert on 14 October and Mr Donald Moeller on 28 October 2012.

I note that there have been no executions in this State since 2007. I therefore urge the competent authorities and the Governor of the State of South Dakota to keep the de-facto moratorium in place and to grant clemency to both inmates.

While I recognize the serious nature of the crimes involved and wish to express my sincere sympathy to the surviving family and friends of the victims, I do not believe that their loss will be mitigated by the deaths of Mr Robert and Mr Moeller.”

Mr Chairperson,

Lastly, the EU would like also to emphasize the recent initiatives taken by the EU and its Member States to push, systematically and in their relations with all states, for a

universal abolition of this cruel and inhumane practice. Lastly, the EU would like also to emphasize the recent initiatives taken by the EU and its Member States to push, systematically and in their relations with all states, for a universal abolition of this cruel and inhumane practice. For example, France launched on 9 October a campaign for universal abolition that aims more particularly to encourage debate and lend support to local players committed to abolition. We would like to draw the attention to the common appeal launched yesterday on the 10 October by many European Ministers for foreign affairs on this issue.

Finally, the EU draws attention to the valuable work of the International Commission Against the Death Penalty, as well as to the forthcoming 5th World Congress Against the Death Penalty, which will take place in Madrid in June 2013.

The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland+ and Serbia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Andorra and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

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

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.