



German Presidency of the Council of the European Union

666th Meeting of the Permanent Council

17 May 2007

EU Statement on Death Penalty in the USA

The EU reiterates its longstanding and active opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances. We consider that the abolition of the death penalty contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and the progressive development of human rights. On the other hand, the death penalty does not serve as an effective deterrent, and any miscarriage of justice, which is inevitable in any legal system, would be irreversible.

While aiming for the universal abolition of the death penalty the EU seeks a moratorium in all countries that retain capital punishment as a first step towards this end. The EU is therefore concerned about an imminent breach of the de facto moratorium in the State of Arizona. The EU has learned that Mr. Robert Charles Comer is to be executed on 22 May 2007. This would be the first execution in that state since November 2000. The EU wishes to encourage the appropriate authorities in the State of Arizona to continue the moratorium on the death penalty and urges them to grant clemency to Mr. Comer.

The EU trusts that the competent authorities in the State of Arizona will be informed of this statement.

On a different matter the EU has learned that the Nebraska Supreme Court has stayed the execution of Carey Dean Moore on 2 May 2007 over concerns about a new electrocution protocol. Nebraska is the only US federal state which still relies

solely on the electric chair for capital punishment. The EU has intervened in this case on the basis of the breaking of a de facto moratorium in the state.

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, and Serbia, EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

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