



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 830 Vienna, 23 September 2010

EU statement on the death penalty in the United States

It is with deep regret that the EU has learned that Ms Teresa Lewis is due to be executed in the State of Virginia today, 23 September 2010.

The EU opposes the use of capital punishment in all cases and under all circumstances and calls for a global moratorium as a first step towards its universal abolition, in line with resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 18 December 2007 and on 18 December 2008. In addition, we note that the International Day against the Death Penalty is marked on 10 October.

We remain particularly concerned by the imposition of the death penalty in cases where the convicted is suffering from mental or intellectual disabilities and we consider this practice contrary to widely accepted human rights norms. The EU notes with concern that Ms. Lewis' mental capacity at the time of the crime and at her subsequent admission of culpability are in question.

While we are aware of the suffering of the victims of violent crime and their families, we recall that, with capital punishment, any miscarriage of justice, from which no legal system is immune, represents an irreversible loss of human life. The EU believes that the abolition of the death penalty is essential to protect human dignity and to the progressive development of human rights. The EU considers capital punishment cruel and inhuman. Furthermore, it has not been

found to act as a deterrent. While the EU fully respects the democratic process of other countries, the concern for human integrity and human dignity, which has inspired us to abolish capital punishment, obviously applies to all human beings.

Taking account of these factors, the EU regrets very much that the State of Virginia has not granted Ms Lewis relief from the death penalty.

The EU trusts that the Government of the United States of America will ensure that the appropriate authorities in the State of Virginia will be immediately informed of this statement.

The candidate countries TURKEY, CROATIA*, the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA* and ICELAND**, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO and SERBIA, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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

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