



## German Presidency of the Council of the European Union

### **671<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Permanent Council**

**21 June 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.

While we are always conscious of the suffering of the victims of violent crime and their families, we strongly believe that capital punishment tends to degrade the respect for the right to life. The EU wishes to stress that in our view the death penalty does not serve as an effective deterrent, and any miscarriage of justice, which is inevitable in any legal system, will be irreversible.

While aiming for the universal abolition of the death penalty the EU seeks a moratorium in all countries, which retain capital punishment, as a first step towards this end. The EU is therefore concerned about an imminent breach of a 60 year de-facto moratorium in the State of South Dakota. The EU has learned that Mr. Elijah Page is to be executed in the week of 9 July 2007. This would be the first execution in that state since January 1946. The EU calls upon the appropriate authorities in the State of South Dakota to continue the moratorium on the death penalty and urges them to commute the sentence of Mr. Page. The EU has already intervened in this case in July 2006.

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

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, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia align themselves with this statement.

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