



1005th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies
26th September 2007

**Statement by the Presidency of the Council of the EU on the creation of the
European Day Against Death Penalty (10th October)**

1. The Presidency of the European Union is extremely concerned about the continued existence and application of the death penalty in many parts of the world.

2. The European Union is at the forefront of abolitionist efforts around the world and will continue to oppose the death penalty in all cases and under all circumstances because it considers the death penalty to be a cruel and inhuman punishment. Everyone has the right to life, in respect of the values and principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights and other international instruments.

3. The Presidency of the European Union is convinced that the abolition of the death penalty contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and the progressive development of human rights. Therefore, we strongly oppose the death penalty and call upon all governments that have not yet abolished it, to take action and to introduce a moratorium on the death penalty with immediate effect.

4. We welcome the considerable progress that has been made in global endeavours to abolish the death penalty over recent years, and welcome the growing number of countries worldwide that have abolished this punishment. This improvement cannot be hostage or reversed by circumstantial or electoral policies. However, we note with deep regret that death sentences and executions remain all too frequent in many states, and the persistent use in a degrading manner of the death sentence in some countries around the world. We also deplore that some countries have resumed executions after prolonged moratoria.

5. The universal abolition of the death penalty is a key objective of EU human rights policy. Thus, the EU, with other countries from all regional groups, will submit a draft resolution at the 62nd UN General Assembly on a universal moratorium and abolition of the death penalty.

6. The Presidency of the European Union urges all the member states of the Council of Europe to strengthen their support to this initiative.

7. The Presidency of the European Union also welcomes the recent debate held by the Parliamentary Assembly on an universal moratorium and abolition of the death penalty, which led to the adoption of an appropriate Resolution (n. 1560).



8. We further acknowledge the importance of the useful contribution triggered by the civil society to achieve this purpose.

9. Therefore, the Presidency of the European Union supports this fundamental Council of Europe's initiative to establish a European Day against Death Penalty on 10th October of each year, which also strengthens the creation of a death penalty free zone in Europe and contributes to the ongoing global efforts towards its universal abolition. It also expresses a profound hope that this initiative could be carried out jointly with the European Union, as originally foreseen.

10. We continue committed with the organization on 9th October this year of an International Conference about this relevant initiative in Lisbon. Portugal, as one of the first European countries to abolish the death penalty in the 19th century, attaches great importance to the abolition of the death penalty, which belongs to the core values of the Council of Europe and the European Union, pledging all the European countries to join this goal.

11. In the framework of the Council of Europe, Protocol 6 to the European Convention on Human Rights unconditionally abolishes the death penalty in peacetime and Protocol 13 to the same Convention prohibits the death penalty in all circumstances. We encourage all the countries that have not done so, to take this opportunity to sign or deposit the instruments of ratification to Protocols 6 and 13 to the Convention on this occasion.