STATEMENT

by High Representative Catherine Ashton on the execution in Japan

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission, issued the following statement today:

"I deplore the execution in Japan of death row inmate Kumagai Tokuhisa on 12 September 2013. This brings the number of people executed since 2012 in Japan to thirteen.

The European Union recognises the serious nature of the crime involved and expresses its sincere sympathy to the family and friends of the victim.

However, the European Union is opposed to the use of capital punishment in all cases and under all circumstances, and has consistently called for its universal abolition. The EU believes that the death penalty is cruel and inhumane and that its abolition is essential to protect human dignity.

I therefore call again on the Japanese authorities to consider seriously a moratorium on executions and to promote a thorough public debate on moving away from capital punishment, in line with the worldwide trend."

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