Statement by the High Representative Catherine Ashton on the recent executions 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 that three prisoners, Masahiro Kanagawa, Keiki Kano and Kaoru Kobayashi, were executed on 21 February in Japan. While recognising the serious nature of the crimes involved and expressing sincere sympathy to the bereaved family and friends of the victims, the European Union does not believe that their loss will be mitigated by these executions.

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 have consistently called on the Japanese authorities to reflect on the continued use of the death penalty and I reiterate my call on Japan to promote a thorough public debate on moving away from capital punishment, in line with the worldwide trend."

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