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J O I N T D E C L A R A T I O N

**by the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and
Security Policy and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe
on the European and World Day against the Death Penalty,
10 October 2014**

"On the European and World Day against the Death Penalty, the European Union and the Council of Europe reaffirm their strong and absolute opposition to capital punishment in all cases and under all circumstances, and their commitment to its worldwide abolition. We are deeply concerned about setbacks in some countries, such as recent mass trials leading to a vast number of death sentences, the extension in domestic legislation of the scope of the death penalty's use, or the resumption of executions after a period of several years.

No execution has taken place in our Member States in the past 17 years. The European Union and the Council of Europe welcome the fact that all Member States of the European Union have now ratified both Protocols 6 and 13 to the European Convention on Human Rights, and urge all other European States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify these instruments which aim at the abolition of the death penalty.

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The European Union and the Council of Europe deeply regret the recent executions carried out by Belarus, the only European country that applies this form of punishment. They strongly urge Belarus to commute the sentences of the two remaining persons sentenced to death in 2013, and to establish a moratorium on executions as a first step towards abolition of the death penalty.

Both organisations welcome the recent steps taken by the African Union towards the adoption of an Additional Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Abolition of the Death Penalty. They welcome that recent ratifications of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 15 December 1989, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, have brought the number of States Parties to eighty-one. They encourage all States which have not yet done so to ratify this protocol on the occasion of its 25th anniversary in 2014.

The European Union and Council of Europe call on all Members of the United Nations to support the Resolution on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty which will be put to vote at the 69th session of the UN General Assembly in December 2014."
