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S T A T E M E N T

**by the Spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on Gabon's
accession to the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR aiming at the
abolition of the death penalty**

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

"The High Representative warmly welcomes the official accession of Gabon, on April 2nd, to the 1989 Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on the abolition of the death penalty.

She congratulates Gabon on reinforcing the global trend towards the abolition of the capital punishment, by becoming the 79th state party to this important treaty. Gabon's accession also marks the remarkable abolitionist trend in Africa, where many countries have done away with the death penalty in law or practice.

The European Union reaffirms its objective of working towards universal abolition of the death penalty. It hopes that the accession to the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR by Gabon will encourage other countries to follow this example."

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

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