



EUROPEAN UNION

DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Washington, 17 January 2003

The Honorable  
George P. Ryan  
The State House  
Room 207  
Springfield, Illinois 62706-1150

Dear Governor Ryan,

While you may receive the [text below](#) from other sources, I wanted to personally ensure that you are aware of the European Union's gratitude and strong support for your recent action regarding the death penalty. Your courageous leadership we hope will be a model to other US officials across the country. The official European Union statement reads as follows:

"The European Union opposes the death penalty in all cases. The European Union considers that the abolition of the death penalty contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and the progressive development of human rights and reaffirms its objective to work towards its universal abolition, seeking a global moratorium on the death penalty as a first step towards that aim.

The European Union therefore welcomes the decision announced on 11 January 2003 by Governor George Ryan of Illinois to commute the sentences of all prisoners on the state's death row to prison terms of life or less. In February 2000 the Governor had already declared a moratorium on all pending executions in Illinois, which was welcomed by the EU.

The possibility of miscarriages of justice leading to the execution of innocent individuals, as acknowledged by Governor Ryan, is one of the important considerations underlying the EU's philosophy concerning the abolition of the death penalty.

Therefore, the European Union encourages all states with capital punishment to consider taking similar measures with a view to the abolition of the death penalty throughout the country."

Sincerely,

2300 M Street NW Washington, DC 20037-1434 Telephone: (202) 852-9550 / Fax: (202) 429-1795

  
Mr. Guenter Burghardt  
Ambassador