

Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union

**Permanent Council No. 640
30 November 2006**

EU Statement on Death Penalty in the USA

The EU reiterates its longstanding and firm opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances. The EU considers that abolition of the death penalty contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and the progressive development of human rights.

We remain particularly concerned by the imposition of the death penalty in cases of persons suffering from mental or intellectual disabilities and consider this practise contrary to widely accepted human rights norms. We urge states not to impose the death penalty in such cases.

We wish to express our concern about an imminent case of execution in the United States of a person suffering from mental illness. The EU has learned that Mr. Percy Levar Walton is to be executed in the State of Virginia on 8 December 2006. The EU has intervened in this case in May 2003 and in May 2006. On both occasions there was a stay of execution. Mr. Percy Walton has been diagnosed as psychotic and suffering from a severe form of schizophrenia. There is also evidence to suggest that he may be mentally retarded. We appeal to the appropriate authorities in the State of Virginia to grant Mr. Walton relief from his death penalty.

The EU trusts that the federal authorities will ensure that the competent State authority in Virginia will be informed of this statement.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia ¹ and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia, EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

¹ Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process