



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union  
on the 1000th execution in the US**

The European Union notes with deep regret that, with the execution of Kenneth Lee Boyd by the State of North Carolina on 2 December 2005, the US has carried out its 1000th execution since the reinstatement of the death penalty in 1976.

The European Union is opposed to the death penalty in all cases and has consistently called for its universal abolition. We believe that the abolition of the death penalty is essential to protect human dignity, and to the progressive development of human rights. We consider this punishment cruel and inhuman. It does not act as a deterrent and any miscarriage of justice - which is inevitable in any legal system - is irreversible. Consequently, the death penalty is abolished throughout the European Union.

**P R E S S**

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In countries that maintain the death penalty, the EU seeks the progressive restriction of its scope and respect for the conditions under which capital punishment may be used, which are set out in several international human rights instruments.

In this regard, the EU welcomes the US Supreme Court rulings of June 2002 and March 2005 declaring the execution of persons with mental retardation and the execution of juveniles respectively, to be unconstitutional. The EU urges the US authorities to extend these restrictions, in particular to the execution of persons with severe mental illness. The EU regrets the US decision to withdraw from the Optional Protocol of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (VCCR), which gives the right to consular assistance in death penalty cases, and urges the US to continue to adhere to the VCCR.

The EU warmly welcomes and values its co-operation with the US on a wide range of human rights concerns around the world. The European Union therefore takes this opportunity to renew its call to the US federal and state authorities for a moratorium on the application of the death penalty, pending its legal abolition.

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

\* Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.