

EMBASSY

WASHINGTON

May 17, 2000

The Honorable George W. Bush  
Governor of Texas  
P.O. Box 1902  
Austin, TX 78767

Dear Governor Bush:

As the representative of the Presidency of the European Union, I wish to convey to you together with my colleagues from France and the European Commission an urgent humanitarian appeal by the EU on behalf of Mr. Gary Graham.

The execution of Mr. Graham, a U.S. citizen, is scheduled to be carried out on June 22, 2000. Permit me to draw your attention to the fact that Mr. Graham was only 17 years old at the time of the crime for which he was convicted. Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) - to which the United States is a party expressly forbids the execution of people whose crime was committed when they were under 18 years of age. The EU considers that this would be contrary to generally accepted human rights norms.

The EU recognizes that the United States has made a reservation to Article 6 of ICCPR. Nevertheless, the EU believes that Article 6 enshrines the minimum rules for the protection of the right to life and the generally accepted standards in this area. It notes that the United Nations Human Rights Committee views the US reservation as incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention and thus should be withdrawn.

During its [55th \(1999\)](#) and [56th \(2000\)](#) sessions, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (CHR) adopted resolutions, brought into the CHR by the EU, on the death penalty. The resolutions - among others - urge all States to comply fully with their obligations under the ICCPR and the Convention on the rights of the Child, notably not to impose the death penalty for crimes committed by persons below 18 years of age.

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights adopted the "[Omnibus resolutions on the Rights of the Child](#)," tabled by the Group of the Latin American and the Caribbean States (GRULAC) and the EU. In the resolutions, a new chapter on juvenile offenders was incorporated. The EU expects that these important developments will be reflected in national practice.

The European Union respectfully urges you to commute Mr. Graham's sentence to life imprisonment, or such other penalty as is compatible with international law.

Yours sincerely,

Joao da Rocha Paris  
Ambassador of Portugal