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EU statement on the death penalty in the USA

It is with deep regret that the EU has learnt that the execution of Mr Terrence Williams is set to be carried out in the State of Pennsylvania on 3 October 2012.

The EU opposes the use of capital punishment in all cases and under all circumstances, and calls for a global moratorium as a first step towards its universal abolition, in line with resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007, 2008 and 2010. We consider that states, which have not as yet abolished the death penalty, should not impose this punishment when a *de facto* moratorium has been in place for an extended period. The execution of Mr Williams would break the *de facto* moratorium currently in place in the State of Pennsylvania since 6 July 1999.

While we are aware of the suffering of the victims of violent crime and their families, we recall that, with capital punishment, any miscarriage of justice, from which no legal system is immune, represents an irreversible loss of human life.

The EU recognizes the serious nature of the crimes involved and wishes to express its sincere sympathy to the surviving family and friends of the victim. However, the EU does not believe that the use of the death penalty can ever be justified.

The EU believes that the abolition of the death penalty is essential to protect human dignity and to the progressive development of human rights. Furthermore, no reliable evidence supports the argument that the death penalty is a deterrent to serious crime. While the EU fully respects the democratic process of other countries, the concern for human integrity and human dignity, which has inspired us to abolish capital punishment, obviously applies to all human beings.

The EU is aware that Mr Williams endured a traumatic childhood, the consequences of which have had a significant destructive effect on his life.

Taking these factors into account, the EU urges the appropriate authorities in the State of Pennsylvania to grant Mr Williams relief from the death penalty.

The EU trusts that the Government of the United States of America will ensure that the appropriate authorities in State of Pennsylvania will be informed of this statement.

The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland+ and Serbia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Andorra and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

* Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.