



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008  
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008  
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

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## **Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union**

### **Permanent Council No. 715 5 June 2008**

#### **EU statement on the death penalty in the USA**

The EU reiterates its longstanding and firm opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances and accordingly aims at its universal abolition, seeking a global moratorium on the death penalty as the first step. The EU considers that abolition of the death penalty is fundamental to the protection of human dignity and to the progressive development of human rights.

While we are aware of the suffering of the victims of violent crime and their families, we strongly believe that capital punishment tends to further a casual attitude to the right to life. In our view, the death penalty does not serve as an effective deterrent, and any miscarriage of justice, which is inevitable in any legal system, would be irreversible.

We remain particularly concerned by the imposition of the death penalty in cases of persons suffering from mental or intellectual disabilities and consider this practice 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 10 June 2008. The EU has intervened in this case in May 2003, May 2006, and November 2006. On these occasions the execution was stayed. Mr. Percy Walton has been diagnosed as

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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.

Furthermore, it is with deep regret that the EU has learned that Mr. Earl Wesley Berry was executed on 21 May 2008 in the State of Mississippi and that Mr. Kevin Green was executed on 27 May 2008 in the State of Virginia. In May the EU made appeals to the appropriate authorities in the State of Mississippi and the State of Virginia to grant these two persons relief from their death penalty as they had been diagnosed suffering from mentally disorders. Regrettably, these appeals had no effect.

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

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia\* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Azerbaijan align themselves with this statement.

\* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process

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