



Brussels, 8 February 2000

5834/00 (Presse 25)

P 14/00

Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the introduction of a moratorium on executions in Illinois, US

The European Union opposes the death penalty in all cases. The European Union considers that the abolition of the death penalty contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and the progressive development of human rights and reaffirms its objective to work towards its universal abolition or at least the introduction of moratoria on executions as a first step towards that aim.

In this sense, the European Union welcomes the decision taken by Governor George Ryan of Illinois to declare a moratorium on all pending executions in that state and expresses its hope that this decision may constitute an important step towards the abolition of the death penalty in Illinois.

The risk of sentencing innocent individuals to death, as acknowledged by Governor Ryan, is one of the main principles underlying the EU's philosophy concerning the abolition of the death penalty. Therefore, the European Union encourages all states in the US with capital punishment to reflect upon this risk and consider taking a similar measure with a view to the abolition of the death penalty throughout the country.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated countries Cyprus and Malta and the EFTA countries, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this declaration.

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