

**P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union  
on the death penalty in Trinidad and Tobago**

The European Union deeply regrets the decision of the authorities of Trinidad and Tobago to break the de facto moratorium on capital punishment that Trinidad and Tobago had observed since 1994. The European Union regrets that its appeals to the Trinidad and Tobago authorities to maintain the moratorium have gone unheard.

In this context the European Union can only reiterate its concern at the decision taken last year by the authorities of Trinidad and Tobago to denounce the American Convention on Human Rights and to cease to recognise the competence of the United Nations Human Rights Committee to consider petitions from persons sentenced to death.

The European Union attaches the utmost importance to respect for the right to life proclaimed in Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The European Union considers that the abolition of the death penalty contributes to strengthening human dignity and to the progressive development of human rights.

8661/99 (Presse 175 - G)

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At the same time, the European Union shares the revulsion of Trinidadians at the most heinous crimes; the Member States of the European Union take this opportunity to express their deep sympathy for the victims of these crimes and their families.

The EU firmly supports the fight against crime and the determination of the authorities of Trinidad and Tobago to combat it, but it does not recognise the death penalty as an effective instrument in preventing crime. The European Union believes that use of the death penalty may on the contrary raise the level of violence in Trinidad and Tobago.

The European Union works resolutely for the universal abolition of the death penalty; it calls on the authorities of Trinidad and Tobago to resume the moratorium on capital punishment.

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

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