



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



**Council Conclusions on the tenth anniversary of the EU  
Guidelines on the Death Penalty  
and adoption of the revised and updated version of  
the EU Guidelines on the Death Penalty**

*2878th GENERAL AFFAIRS Council meeting  
Luxembourg, 16 June 2008*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council recalls the adoption of the EU Guidelines on the Death Penalty on 29 June 1998. They were the first ever EU Guidelines on Human Rights to be adopted, thus underlining the priority placed on the issue of the death penalty by the EU. These EU Guidelines have gone on to become a key practical tool of the EU's human rights policy towards third countries.

The Council adopts the revised and updated version of the EU Guidelines on the Death Penalty as set out in doc. 10015/08 and reaffirms that working towards universal abolition of the death penalty constitutes an integral objective of the EU's human rights policy.

The Council notes that since the adoption of these Guidelines 10 years ago, considerable progress has been made worldwide towards the abolition of the death penalty. The adoption by the UN General Assembly last year of a cross-regional initiative calling for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty, in the view of the Council, is a significant achievement in this regard. The Council draws attention to the establishment of a 'European Day against the Death Penalty' in December 2007, which is to be celebrated on 10 October each year.

The Council recalls the opposition of the European Union to the death penalty in all cases and in all circumstances. The abolition of the death penalty contributes to the enhancement of human dignity

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and the progressive development of human rights. For this reason, the Council regrets that a number of States still maintain the death penalty. We call on all these States to abolish the death penalty; if necessary with the immediate establishment of a moratorium on the use of death penalty, with a view to abolishing it."

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