

Brussels, 9 October 2007

The European Union is united against capital punishment

In the context of the International Conference taking place today in Lisbon, the Commission, jointly with the Presidency of the European Union and the Council of Europe, reaffirms its unreserved opposition to the use of capital punishment under all circumstances.

President Barroso said that *"The European Union is unreservedly opposed to the use of capital punishment under all circumstances and has consistently called for the worldwide abolition of this punishment. Death penalty is against human dignity. We want to give visibility to the efforts of the many Non-Governmental Organisations and individuals who strive, day after day, towards the abolition of the death penalty."*

Vice-president Franco Frattini, Commissioner responsible for Justice, Freedom and Security, added that *"The death penalty is a wild and revengeful parody of justice. Today, we can affirm with pride that death penalty has no place within the European model and confirm our commitment to promote universal abolition"*.

A growing number of countries are abolishing the death penalty: 133 countries have done so in practice or in law.

In line with its common foreign policy objective to develop and consolidate respect for human rights, the EU has become the lead institutional actor in the world against death penalty. In June, the EU tabled a resolution at the UN General Assembly proposing a world-wide moratorium on executions.

The Commission has funded around 30 anti-death penalty projects worldwide since 1994, with an overall budget of about €15 million.

For more information:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/news/intro/news_intro_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/human_rights/adp/index.htm