



EUROPEAN UNION

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**Statement by the spokesperson of HR Catherine Ashton
on death sentence in Gambia**

The spokesperson of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President of the Commission Catherine Ashton issued the following statement today:

"The EU expresses its grave concern concerning the death sentence pronounced on 15 July against 8 persons accused of treason and conspiracy. The EU urges the Gambian authorities not to carry out any executions against the convicted individuals, and expects the authorities to respect their right of appeal and to take all necessary steps to ensure that their right to a fair trial is fully guaranteed.

The European Union reiterates its longstanding position on the use of death penalty and recalls the importance of UN Resolutions calling for the establishment of a moratorium as a first step towards abolishing the death penalty. It takes note of the Gambian abstention in the respective votes, and encourages The Gambia to actively support a similar Resolution expected to be tabled during this year's UN General Assembly.

The European Union encourages The Gambia to keep its commitment of exercising a moratorium with a view to considering the abolition of the death penalty for all crimes. Such a step would be in line with the global trend towards abolition."

P R E S S

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu

Darren Ennis +32 498 963 293 - +32 2 296 32 93 - Darren.Ennis@ec.europa.eu

COMM-SPP-HRVP-ASHTON@ec.europa.eu

www.eeas.europa.eu

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