



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the Execution of Seven Offenders, Including Two Juveniles,
Carried Out in Saudi Arabia on 12 May 2009**

The European Union firmly condemns that on 12 May 2009, death sentences were carried out against Sultan Bin Khalid Mahmud al-Maskati, Yusef Bin Hassan Bin Salman al-Muwallad, Qassim Bin 'Ali Bin Ibrahim Al-Nakhli, Sultan Bin Sulayman Bin Muslim al-Muwallad, 'Issa Bin Muhammad 'Umar Muhammad, Bilal Bin Muslih Bin Jabir al-Muwallad, Ahmad Hamid Muhammad Sabir.

The European Union opposes the death penalty in all cases and in all circumstances. Our view is that the abolition of the death penalty contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and the progressive development of human rights. The European Union considers the death penalty as a cruel and inhuman punishment and is of the firm conviction that it provides no added value in terms of deterrence. Further, European Union recalls that any miscarriage or failure of justice in the application of capital punishment represents an irreparable and irreversible loss of human life.

P R E S S

The European Union is particularly disturbed about the way in which the death penalty is applied in Saudi Arabia, notably that Sultan Bin Sulayman Bin Muslim al-Muwallad and ‘Issa bin Muhammad ‘Umar Muhammad were executed after being convicted of offences committed as juveniles when they were 17 years old. The European Union wishes to recall that such executions are contradictory to Saudi Arabia’s obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 20 November 1989, which Saudi Arabia ratified on 26 January 1996 and which states in article 37(a) that “[n]either capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release shall be imposed for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age.”

The European Union considers it indispensable that where States insist on applying the death penalty, it is carried out with due respect to international obligations for the protection of human rights. This also includes the obligation that the death penalty may only be carried out pursuant to a final judgment after legal process which gives all possible safeguards to ensure a fair trial, including the right of anyone suspected of or charged with a crime for which capital punishment may be imposed to adequate legal assistance at all stages of the proceedings.

The European Union therefore firmly condemns the recent executions and urges Saudi Arabia to comply with its international obligations. Moreover, the European Union encourages Saudi Arabia to establish 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, as demonstrated, inter alia, by the recent UN General Assembly Resolutions calling for a moratorium.

The Candidate Countries Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia align themselves with this declaration.

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.