

**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 introduction of a moratorium on executions in the Philippines**

"The European Union considers that the abolition of the death penalty constitutes a significant step to enhance human dignity and progressively develop human rights and reaffirms its objective to work towards its universal abolition or at least the introduction of a moratorium on executions as a first step towards that aim.

In this sense, the European Union welcomes the decision taken by President Joseph Estrada to declare a moratorium on executions and expresses its hope that this decision will be extended after the end of the year and might constitute an important step towards the future abolition of death penalty in the Philippines".

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

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