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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the Philippines: the execution of Leo ECHEGARAY**

The European Union deeply regrets the execution on 5 February 1999 of Mr Leo Echegaray, a Philippine citizen, and the Philippine Authorities' decision thus to break the de facto moratorium on executions that the Philippines had kept for more than twenty-two years. The European Union regrets that its repeated approaches to the Philippine Authorities to maintain the moratorium have not been heard.

The European Union considers that the abolition of the death penalty contributes to strengthening human dignity and to the progressive development of human rights.

The European Union attaches the utmost importance to respect for the right to life proclaimed in Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The European Union does not recognise capital punishment as an effective instrument in preventing crime.

The European Union works resolutely for the universal abolition of the death penalty; it calls on the Philippine Authorities to resume the moratorium on executions.

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