

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Brussels, 31 December 1998 (12.01)

14462/98 (Presse 466)
P 163/98

**Presidency Declaration on behalf of the European Union on the
moratorium on executions in Turkmenistan**

The EU considers that the abolition of the death penalty contributes to increasing human dignity and to the steady improvement of human rights.

As the abolition of the death penalty is an unwavering objective of the Union, the EU greatly welcomes the moratorium on executions announced by Turkmenistan.

That decision is seen by the EU as a gesture by the Turkmenistan authorities towards promoting human rights.

The decision of the Turkmenistan authorities constitutes an important first step towards the abolition of capital punishment.

The EU would encourage the Turkmenistan authorities to continue their undertaking and their efforts to achieve abolition of the death penalty.