

**P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

Brussels, 27 March 1998

7096/98 (Presse 87)  
P. 26/98

**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union  
on the abolition of the death penalty in Estonia**

The European Union welcomes the recent decision of the Estonian Parliament to ratify Protocol number six of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights, thereby abolishing the death penalty.

This is a significant step forward on the eve of the opening of Estonia's accession negotiations to join the EU. It reinforces Estonia's commitment to the promotion of Human Rights.

The European Union reaffirms its support for the Council of Europe's position calling for the universal abolition of the death penalty and insisting on the maintenance, in the meantime, of existing moratoria on executions in Europe.

---