

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
concerning the decision by Ukraine's Parliament to abolish the death penalty
and to ratify Protocol 6 to the European Convention for the Protection of
Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

The European Union welcomes the decision of the Parliament of Ukraine to abolish the death penalty and to ratify Protocol 6 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms concerning the abolition of the death penalty.

The European Union considers that abolition of the death penalty contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and the progressive development of human rights and reaffirms its objective to work towards its universal abolition or at least the introduction of moratoria on executions as a first step towards that aim.

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The decision of the Ukrainian Parliament on the abolition of the death penalty and on the ratification of Protocol 6 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the first in international law to make the abolition of the death penalty a legal obligation for the contracting parties, constitute very important steps towards the protection of human rights in Ukraine and the universal abolition of the death penalty, which is the ultimate goal of the European Union as set forth in the EU Declaration and the EU guidelines adopted in June 1998.

These important decisions also contribute to the achievement of the aims contained in the Common Strategy on Ukraine regarding the promotion of human rights and strengthens the strategic partnership between the EU and Ukraine.

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