

Frank-Walter Steinmeier  
President of the General Affairs and External Relations Council

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Dr Steinmeier,

**Subject: Death Penalty Resolution in the United Nations**

In light of the forthcoming discussions in the Political and Security Committee (12 June), and the General Affairs and External Relations Council (18 June) on a possible EU draft United Nations' resolution on the death penalty, Amnesty International (AI) would like to highlight two key elements that we deem essential for a successful outcome of such an endeavour.

**1. Timing**

We wish to reiterate our view that such an initiative must be carefully prepared and a resolution introduced with the aim of securing its adoption by the UN General Assembly (UNGA). For this to happen, we need a genuine cross-regional approach and while we appreciate current efforts, more time is needed in pursuing these objectives. In addition, tabling a resolution at the current UNGA session presents additional procedural obstacles, which would add to the difficulties of obtaining sufficient support to secure the adoption of a resolution. Consequently, tabling a resolution during the current session of the UNGA does not appear to be a course of action that can achieve a successful outcome.

In order to secure sufficient support, intensive follow-up and diplomatic lobbying beyond the German Presidency will be necessary. The Portuguese Presidency must be assured the full support of the services from all EU states to secure the desired outcome. In the coming months it is essential to strengthen cross-regional alliances in capitals and among New York diplomatic missions.

AI supports in principle an initiative to pursue a resolution at the UNGA's 62<sup>nd</sup> session. The precise timing of such an initiative should be defined once the assessment of the chances of a successful outcome becomes clearer. The assessment should also include whether co-sponsors will retain their co-sponsorship of the draft resolution in the face of 'wrecking amendments'

**2. Content**

The EU Statement on the death penalty that was presented to the UNGA last year enjoyed the support of 85 Member States. We believe that any draft resolution should be concise, build on the EU statement and as a minimum include the following elements:

- Affirming the right to life and that abolition of the death penalty is essential for the protection of that right;
- Calling on retentionist states to establish a moratorium on executions as a first step towards abolition of the death penalty and request the UN Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the moratorium to the next session of the UNGA; and
- Calling on retentionist states to respect international standards that guarantee the protection of the rights for those facing the death penalty.

We look forward to hearing from you as to the outcome of your deliberations.

Yours sincerely,



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