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Declaration by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on behalf of the European Union on executions in Japan

The EU deeply regrets the execution of Yasuaki Uwabe, Tomoyuki Furusawa and Yasutoshi Matsuda on 29 March 2012, and the fact that this marks the resumption of executions in Japan after twenty months during which none took place. The European Union is opposed to the use of capital punishment in all cases and under all circumstances and has consistently called for its universal abolition. The EU believes that the death penalty is cruel and inhuman and that its abolition is essential to protect human dignity.

Japan and the EU are close partners on a wide range of human rights concerns around the world. The EU has on a number of occasions called on the Japanese authorities for a moratorium on the application of the death penalty, pending its complete legal abolition. This would bring Japan into line with the worldwide trend away from the death penalty. More than two-thirds of countries around the world have formally abolished or ceased to apply the death penalty, as called for by the UN General Assembly.

The Acceding Country Croatia^{*}, the Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia^{*}, Montenegro^{*}, Iceland⁺ and Serbia^{*}, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this declaration.

* Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

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