



EUROPEAN UNION

Brussels, 5 January 2012
A 5/12

Statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton on the increasing use of the death penalty in Iran

Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, issued the following statement today:

"I am deeply concerned at the number of executions in Iran in 2011. This goes against the worldwide trend towards the abolition of the death penalty. The number of executions in Iran last year is reportedly the highest in recent history, making Iran the world's leading user of the death penalty per inhabitant.

Thousands of individuals remain at risk of execution, including Ms Sakineh Mohammadi-Ashtiani and Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani. The EU reiterates its call on Iran not to execute them. Hundreds of individuals were executed in 2011 after grossly unfair trials, without the right of appeal and for offences which according to international standards should not result in capital punishment. The EU recalls that in countries still retaining the death penalty, this sentence may be used only for the most serious crimes.

The EU holds a strong and principled position against the death penalty. It therefore calls on Iran, as it does on all states which insist on maintaining the death penalty, to halt pending executions and to introduce a moratorium."

P R E S S

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

Michael Mann +32 498 999 780 - +32 2 299 97 80 - Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu

Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu

Sebastien Brabant +32 498 986 433 - Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu

COMM-SPP-HRVP-ASHTON@ec.europa.eu

www.eeas.europa.eu

EN