



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to EU Statement on the Death Penalty

Delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Douglas A. Davidson
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 29, 2003

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We take note of the EU statement concerning the death penalty in the United States and the use of capital punishment in the cases of Messieurs Charm and Rachman, as well as the case of Mr. Walton.

Mr. Chairman, as Ambassador Minikes stated just two weeks ago at the last meeting of the Permanent Council, the death penalty is a political issue that must be decided domestically. In the United States, this decision is made by the individual states, through a democratic process, and 12 of our states have chosen not to impose capital punishment. Furthermore, in those states that do impose capital punishment, the sentence is carried out only after the rigorous application of due process of law.

In addition, I would like to note, as we have repeatedly in the past, that there is no OSCE commitment prohibiting the use of the death penalty. In fact the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights specifically recognizes the right of States that have not abolished the death penalty to impose it. Moreover, international law clearly permits the imposition of that penalty.

The United States will continue to keep the Permanent Council apprised of developments regarding the death penalty in our country.

Thank you.