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

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

"The High Representative remains deeply concerned by the alarming increase in the number of reported executions in Iran. According to the latest data, compiled from a number of sources, the rate of executions in Iran during the first 5 months of 2012 confirmed the country as one of the world's leading users of the death penalty - as was also the case in 2011. In the week beginning 14 May alone, the Iranian authorities confirmed that 35 executions took place.

Thousands of individuals remain at risk of execution, even for acts which are not considered as among the most serious crimes according to international minimum standards. The EU calls upon Iran to commute all such death sentences.

The situation in Iran goes against the worldwide trend towards the abolition of the death penalty. The EU holds a strong and principled position against the death penalty. It calls on Iran, as it does on all states which insist on maintaining capital punishment, to halt pending executions and to introduce a moratorium on the death penalty."

P R E S S

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