

Press Release

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PACE President qualifies Polish opposition to a European Day against the Death Penalty as unacceptable

Strasbourg, 07.09.2007 – René van der Linden, the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), today qualified the Polish opposition to a European Day against the Death Penalty as "unacceptable" and condemned the Polish government's position.

"By taking this position, the Polish government prevents other EU member states from sending a clear signal to all those countries in the world which still apply capital punishment. The same goes for the larger 47-member Council of Europe, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary as a death-penalty-free zone.

The application of the death penalty constitutes torture and inhuman or degrading punishment within the meaning of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Willingness to institute an immediate moratorium on executions, and to abolish the death penalty, has become a precondition for accession to the Organisation," he said.

Mr van der Linden recalled that one year ago, the League of Polish Families had called for reintroduction of the death penalty, a petition openly supported by President Kaczynski at the time. "PACE will continue to closely monitor the situation in Poland," he concluded.

The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 318 members from the national parliaments of the 47 member states.

President: René van der Linden (Netherlands, EPP/CD); Secretary General of the Assembly: Mateo Sorinas.

Political Groups: SOC (Socialist Group); EPP/CD (Group of the European People's Party); ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe); EDG (European Democratic Group); UEL (Group of the Unified European Left).