

Press Release

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Council of Europe Secretary General Terry Davis pays tribute to Amnesty International following the publication of their report on death sentences and executions in 2007

Strasbourg, 15.04.2008 – Following the publication of a report by Amnesty International on the worldwide use of the death penalty, Council of Europe Secretary General Terry Davis today made the following statement:

"The Preface to the 2007 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices published by the US Department of State begins with President Bush saying that freedom can be resisted, and freedom can be delayed, but freedom cannot be denied. I could not agree more, but I would add that the same goes for the abolition of death penalty in the world.

"I am convinced that one day, in the very near future, this inhuman form of punishment will be eradicated throughout the world.

"Today, Amnesty International has published its report on death sentences and executions in 2007. A cross-reference between the US and the AI reports reveals a very interesting fact, namely that the lists of the top human rights offenders in the US State Department report and Amnesty International's list of countries with the highest number of executions are largely identical.

"In Europe we have already put two and two together and accepted that the abolition of the death penalty is part and parcel of a genuine commitment to human dignity and human rights. That is why the Council of Europe produced Protocols 6 and 13 to the European Convention on Human Rights, which abolish the death penalty in all circumstances. It goes without saying that the work of Amnesty International, which has been mobilising public opinion and keeping up the pressure on politicians, has contributed greatly to the decision by the governments of the Council of Europe member states to transform Europe into a death penalty-free zone."

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