

Statement on the executions scheduled in Arkansas

Seven executions by lethal injection, scheduled by the US State of Arkansas for the period between 17 April and 27 April, would break the de-facto moratorium on the death penalty observed by this US State since November 2005. Arkansas would also become the first State in the US to conduct seven executions over an 11-day period since the resumption of the use of the death penalty in 1977 in the United States.

The European Union opposes capital punishment, which fails to act as a deterrent to crime, represents an unacceptable denial of human dignity and integrity and cannot be justified under any circumstances. More than 140 countries in the world are now abolitionist in law or practice.

Today, the death penalty is illegal in nineteen of the fifty US States and the District of Columbia. The number of executions in the US has steadily declined to its lowest level in 2016. The executions in Arkansas, if carried out as planned, would be a serious setback in this overall development.

We therefore call on the Governor of Arkansas to commute the sentences of Mr Bruce Earl Ward, Mr Don Williamson Davis, Mr Ledell Lee, Mr Stacey Eugene Johnson, Mr Jack Harold Jones, Mr Marcel W. Williams, Mr Kenneth D. Williams, as well as the sentence of Mr Jason F. McGehee, which has been temporarily stayed, and grant them relief from the death penalty.

Statement by the Spokesperson on the executions scheduled in Arkansas

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Republic of Moldova: Council agrees to €100 million financial assistance

The Republic of Moldova's economy was affected by political instability during the period between elections in November 2014 and January 2016. It has also been affected by a banking fraud scandal, weak economic activity and import bans imposed by Russia. Since early 2016, the authorities have adopted a number of **reforms**, but need to undertake further efforts in implementing them, whilst those responsible for banking frauds need to be brought to justice. Reforms in the **financial sector** and in the management of **public finances** have been undertaken in the framework of negotiations on an IMF programme.

In July 2016 the Moldovan authorities and the IMF agreed a three-year extended credit facility and extended fund facility arrangement for \$178.7 million. The Republic of Moldova requested complementary assistance from the EU in August 2015 and renewed that request in March 2016.

The EU assistance would be subject to a **memorandum of understanding** (MOU), including precise and specific conditions, to be agreed by the Republic of Moldova with the Commission.

A precondition would be that the Republic of Moldova respects effective democratic mechanisms, including a **multi-party parliamentary system**. It would have to respect the **rule of law** and guarantee respect for **human rights**. Objectives also include the efficiency, transparency and accountability of public finance management, an effective prevention of corruption and money laundering, and financial sector governance and supervision.

The Commission and the European External Action Service would regularly monitor the fulfilment of these preconditions and objectives.

The decision requires a qualified majority within the Council, in agreement with the Parliament. The legal basis is article 212 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

EU Trust Fund for Africa adopts €90 million programme on protection of migrants and improved migration management in Libya

Today, the EU Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa has adopted a comprehensive €90 million programme to reinforce protection and resilience of migrants, refugees and host communities in Libya. The programme will also support improved migration management in the country.

High Representative/Vice-President Federica **Mogherini** said: *“For the European Union, Libya and the Libyans have been and stay a top priority. We are working to promote a political solution to the Libyan crisis and to support the Libyan authorities on the many challenges they have to face, including the managing of the migration flows. As the first donor for Libya, we already are providing a sizeable package of support worth €120 million to assist the authorities and the population. And while we are working to provide training and capacity building to the coast guard to save lives in the Mediterranean Sea, we are addressing the appalling situation the migrants stranded in Libya face, together with international organisations such as IOM and UNHCR. The additional €90 million we adopt today are aimed at protecting and assisting migrants in the country, and the people who host them. Our aim remains cooperating in protecting lives, and promoting peace and stability in Libya. The European Union is doing its part and the Libyan authorities, all of them, have to do theirs”.*

Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes **Hahn** said: *“At the initiative of the European Commission, the EU Trust Fund for Africa is taking rapid action on a pressing priority for both the EU and our partner countries. By supporting actions in Libya, today’s newly adopted programme will address the needs of the migrants and contribute to a better management of migration flows. In addition, the projects will also support improved socio-economic conditions for all in Libya, and thus contribute to reducing the drivers of irregular migration and make the smugglers’ task more difficult”.*

The new programme addresses various aspects of the migration challenge in Libya and along the Central Mediterranean route: stepping up the protection of migrants and refugees, including the most vulnerable, in Libya; improving the conditions of host communities and of internally displaced persons, taking into account the difficult socio-economic conditions in Libya; and facilitating the voluntary return of migrants from Libya to their countries of origin. The programme activities will be implemented in the main areas of

settlement or transit of migrants and refugees (Libyan Southern border, municipalities along the migratory routes and along the coastal area) and in areas of displacement of Libyans and places to which internally displaced populations are returning.

The programme includes the following activities:

- 1. Protection (€48 million):** assistance to and protection of migrants and refugees at disembarkation points, in detention centres and urban settings (e.g. primary health care, psychological first aid, identification of vulnerable persons – including children – access to food and non-food items); voluntary humanitarian returns and reintegration of migrants to their countries of origin (overall 15,000 envisaged); creation of 'Safe Spaces' as alternatives to detention (shelters providing 24/7 care and specialised services); assistance to migrants on the move in the form of information on viable options (including returns) and risks of irregular migration as well as food and non-food items; collection and analysis of data on mixed migration flows, routes and trends through a 'Displacement Tracking Mechanism' which will help better understand the migration dynamics.
- 2. Socio-economic development at municipal level and local governance (€42 million):** activities to improve socio-economic development at municipal level and local governance, through strengthening capacities of local authorities to provide services and foster local development and stability, through provision and access to quality services for Libyans and migrants (including health facilities and education and rehabilitation of local infrastructures for example) and through local economic development and access to job opportunities (including through safe income for migrants and host communities in the South where smuggling and trafficking provide major revenues).

The programme will be implemented through five partners, selected on the basis of their capacity to surge swift operational deployment building on existing operations and presence on the ground: 1) the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2) the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 3) the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), 4) the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and 5) the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ). Concrete implementation on the ground will start after finalisation of contracting with the partners.

Background

Migrants transiting or remaining in Libya are facing increasingly dire conditions. The programme addresses the priorities set out by the European Commission in its Joint Communication "Migration on the Central Mediterranean Route: Managing flows, saving lives" (25 January 2017), confirmed and further developed by the Heads of State or Government in the Malta Declaration of 3 February 2017. Further actions under the EU Trust Fund for Africa will address the remaining priorities identified in both documents.

The planned activities cover:

- reducing the number of crossings and saving lives at sea;
- stepping up the fight against smugglers and traffickers;
- development of local communities in Libya to improve their socio-economic situation and enhance their resilience as host communities;
- protecting migrants, increasing resettlement and promoting assisted voluntary returns and reintegration;
- managing migrant flows through the southern Libyan border;
- increased cooperation with Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria.

For More Information

[Communication of 25 January 2017: Migration on the Central Mediterranean route. Managing flows, saving lives](#)

[Annex to the Communication](#)

[Malta Declaration of 3 February 2017](#)

['North of Africa Window' of the EU Emergency Trust Fund](#)

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