

**General Assembly**

Distr.: General
24 July 2001
English
Original: French

Fifty-sixth session

Items 131 (a) and (b) of the provisional agenda*

Human rights questions: implementation of human rights instruments; human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Letter dated 23 July 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your attention a statement issued on 17 July 2001 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union concerning President Putin's statement supporting the abolition of the death penalty in the Russian Federation (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Jean **De Ruyt**
Permanent Representative of Belgium
to the United Nations

* A/56/150.



Annex to the letter dated 23 July 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Statement concerning President Putin's statement supporting the abolition of the death penalty in the Russian Federation issued on 17 July 2001 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union

The European Union welcomes the comments made on 9 July 2001 by President Putin opposing the re-establishment of the death penalty in the Russian Federation.

The European Union calls upon the Russian Federation to abolish the death penalty both de facto and de jure and to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Protocol No. 6 to the European Convention on Human Rights as soon as possible.

The European Union repeats its opposition to the death penalty, and reaffirms that it considers that the abolition of the death penalty contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and the progressive development of human rights.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated countries Cyprus and Malta and the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration.
