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From:	Presidency
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Explanation of position on the death penalty

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Delegations will find below the proposed explanation of the EU position on the death penalty to be discussed at the HDG meeting on 7-8 April 2016 and to be presented at UNGASS, in New York, after the adoption of the UNGASS outcome document.

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union and its Member States and the following countries, which align themselves with this statement: XXXX to speak on the issue of the death penalty.

2. We deeply regret that the outcome document does not include language on the death penalty. We have a strong and unequivocal opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances and consider that the death penalty undermines human dignity and errors made in its application are irreversible. Moreover, imposing the death penalty for drug offences is against norms of international law, specifically Art. 6 Para 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

3. We underline the importance of the full implementation of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on a Moratorium on the use of death penalty, which was adopted in December 2012 with an unprecedented number of votes. As an interim it calls for international minimum standards on its use to be respected. Furthermore, we welcome the decision of the International Narcotics Control Board to call on countries still applying the death penalty to consider its abolition for drug-related offences, and the statement from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime that the use of the death penalty has never been in the letter or the spirit of the drug control conventions.

4. We urge all United Nations' Member States to respect the international minimum standards on the use of death penalty and impose a moratorium on its use as a step towards its final abolition.

5. We also encourage Member States to adopt safeguards to prevent criminal justice or other forms of international assistance resulting in a death sentence being applied, and to hold international agencies to account for compliance with this and all other human rights obligations.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.