

Tuesday, 25 September 2007 - Strasbourg

Implementation of the Council decision on the moratorium against death penalty (debate)

Ana Maria Gomes (PSE). - (PT) My country, Portugal, was a forerunner in the abolition of the death penalty in 1867 and I therefore take the greatest pride in this initiative by the Portuguese Presidency to institute a European Day against the Death Penalty in line with all Portugal's actions at international level, within the framework of Europe and the United Nations, for the abolition of the death penalty and in protest against the governments who are the main perpetrators of that inhuman practice, in particular China, the United States and Iran.

I find it absolutely shocking that the Polish Government should have tried to block this initiative with such opportunistic and contradictory arguments. The Polish people must be made aware that the Kaczynski Government is not only doing a disservice to the European Union and its fundamental values, but is also doing dreadful harm to the good name and prestige of Poland. At stake are the most essential values which distinguish civilisation from barbarism. The Portuguese Presidency cannot be stopped, must not allow itself to be intimidated by opposition from the Polish Government. It must keep the proposal, put it swiftly to the vote within the General Affairs and External Relations Council, leave the Polish Government to its chosen isolation and go ahead with celebrating the European Day against the Death Penalty on 10 October.