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to the Commission

Subject: EU initiatives against the death penalty in Iraq and persecutions of LGBT persons

According to a report by Amnesty International released on 20 March 2009¹, nearly 130 people face imminent execution in Iraq, data confirmed by the Supreme Judicial Council on behalf of the Iraqi Government. The authorities are reported to plan to carry out the executions in batches of 20 per week. The death penalty was suspended for over a year following the invasion of Iraq, but was re-introduced on 8 August 2004. Since then, hundreds of people have been sentenced to death in 2008 (at least 285 people were sentenced to death and at least 34 were executed), in 2007 (at least 199 people were sentenced to death and 33 executed) and in 2006 (at least 65 people were put to death). The actual figures could be much higher as there are no official statistics for the number of prisoners facing execution. Most of those currently facing execution are likely to have been sentenced to death by the Central Criminal Court of Iraq (CCCI), whose proceedings consistently fall short of international standards for fair trial. Some are likely to have been convicted of crimes such as murder and kidnapping on the basis of confessions they allege were extracted under torture during their pre-trial detention by Iraqi security forces. Allegations of torture are not being investigated adequately or at all by the CCCI. Torture of detainees held by Iraqi security forces remains rife. Iraqi and international LGBT groups report that a number of LGBT persons could also be executed because of their sexual orientation, claiming that in Iraq around 60 gays have been killed since December, in a campaign by police to rid the country of gay people. This situation led Amnesty International to demand urgent and concerted action by the Iraqi government in the face of the killings².

According to a news article³ on 17 April, an Iraqi group has created a death list in Sadr City of people who are potentially gay, and has hung up posters with death threats.

Is the Commission aware of this situation? What diplomatic and political initiatives will it take to ensure that Iraq does not proceed to executions, that the law is changed to outlaw the death penalty, that LGBT persons are protected by the authorities against police abuse and persecution by privates, that asylum is granted in EU Member States for those persecuted in Iraq and who risk the death penalty if repatriated?

¹ <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/news/scores-face-execution-iraq-six-years-after-invasion-20090320>

² <http://iraqilgbt.uk.blogspot.com/>

³ <http://www.nu.nl/algemeen/1950353/homos-op-iraakse-dodenlijst.html>