

Resolution on the death penalty, particularly the case of Troy Davis

2008/2618(RSP) - 10/07/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate which took place during the sitting of 10 July 2008, the European Parliament adopted, by 52 votes to 0 with 1 abstention, a resolution on the death penalty, particularly the case of Troy Davis. The resolution had been tabled for consideration in plenary by the EPP-ED, PES, ALDE, UEN, Greens/EFA and GUE/NGL groups. Troy Davis is sentenced to death by the Georgia State Court in 1991 for the murder of a policeman and scheduled to be executed at the end of July 2008. Parliament recalls that, according to Troy Davis' lawyers, there is abundant proof of his innocence, material evidence against him has never been produced and seven witnesses for the prosecution have retracted their testimony. On 4 August 2007 the Supreme Court of Georgia agreed to reconsider new elements casting doubt on Troy Davis' guilt. The resolution recalls that in the United States the power of clemency in cases where a capital sentence has been imposed exists as a failsafe against irreversible errors that the courts are unable or unwilling to remedy.

Parliament calls upon those countries where the death penalty is imposed to take the necessary steps towards its abolition. It asks that Troy Davis' death sentence be commuted and, in view of the abundant evidence which might lead to such commutation, for the relevant courts to grant him a retrial. Members appeal urgently to the Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles to commute Troy Davis' death sentence. They call on the Presidency of the Council and the Delegation of the Commission to the United States to raise the issue as a matter of urgency with the US authorities.