

EUROPEAN UNION  
DELEGATION TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The Ambassador

Washington, 6 May 2019  
Del-usa  
DD/PR/

The Honorable William Lee  
Governor of the State of Tennessee  
State Capitol  
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Governor Lee,

The European Union regrets that the State of Tennessee plans to execute Mr. Don Edward Johnson on May 16. We would like to make an urgent appeal for clemency on his behalf.

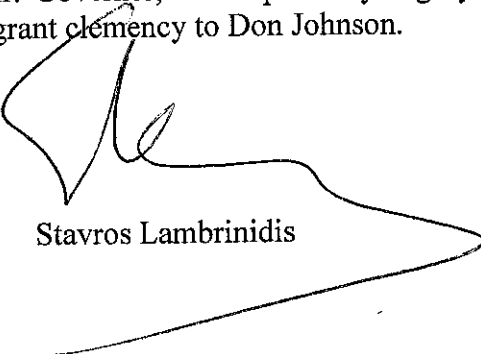
The European Union recognizes that the murder of Connie Johnson was a terrible act deserving of harsh punishment and wishes to express its sincere sympathy to the family and friends of the victim. However, the European Union also firmly believes that capital punishment does not serve the memory or bring compensation for the victims of heinous crimes. Even more so in this case where the daughter of the victim, Cynthia Vaughn, is also asking for clemency.

We believe that the death penalty is a cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, has no proven deterrence effect and carries the risk of irreversible punishment in cases of fatal judicial errors, which are inevitable in any court proceeding no matter how advanced. This is a position shared by all 28 Member States, who have abolished the death penalty and who nevertheless continue to effectively punish those responsible for the most serious crimes.

We greatly value the close relationship between the State of Tennessee and the European Union, from trade and investment to people to people contacts. We previously expressed our concern to Governor Haslam when the State of Tennessee resumed executions last August after a nine-year hiatus, contrary to the national and worldwide trend towards ending the use of capital punishment, and we are reiterating our concerns now.

Taking the above considerations into account, Mr. Governor, we respectfully urge you to exercise all of the powers vested in your office to grant clemency to Don Johnson.

Sincerely,



Stavros Lambrinidis