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MEP welcomes Libyan decision on death penalty

MEP Simon Busuttil welcomed Libya's decision to convert the death sentence of the Bulgarian nurses and a Palestinian doctor into a prison term. The decision was taken on Monday by the Libyan High Judicial Council.

"This decision removes once and for all the death threat that has been hanging on the six people concerned since 1999. It is a very good and important step forward." Dr Busuttil said welcoming the decision.

The nurses and the doctor are now expected to benefit from an agreement between Bulgaria and Libya to be transferred to Bulgaria, thereby leaving the Libyan prison system altogether. They had long protested their innocence in the case in which they were found guilty of having infected hundreds of Libyan children with the HIV virus and sentenced to death. The sentence has now been commuted into one of life imprisonment. Scores of children have since died.

"This development is good for the medical personnel but also good for Libya. It removes what had become a serious obstacle in EU-Libya relations and puts them back on track." Dr Busuttil said. "We now look forward for a final settlement of this long-outstanding issue with the transfer of the prisoners to Bulgaria. The sooner this takes place the better for all concerned." he concluded.

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