



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1309 Vienna, 15 April 2021

EU statement on the abolition of death penalty in the State of Virginia, USA

The European Union welcomes the signing by Governor Ralph Northam on 24 March of the legislation abolishing the death penalty in the State of Virginia, making Virginia the 23rd US State to dispense with capital punishment.

Virginia's decision follows the global trend against the death penalty and the recent abolishment of the death penalty in the States of Washington (2018), New Hampshire (2019), and Colorado (2020). Three other US States have gubernatorial moratoriums in place.

The EU strongly hopes that these positive examples will encourage the US Federal Government and other US States to join the growing national and global movement towards abolition.

The EU reaffirms its strong opposition to the use of the death penalty at all times and in all circumstances. The death penalty violates the inalienable right to life enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. Miscarriages of justice, inevitable in any judicial system, are irreversible. Capital punishment also fails to act as a deterrent to crime.

The EU will continue its long-standing campaign against the death penalty, including within the OSCE. We call on the two participating States that still maintain the death penalty in law and in practice, as well as on relevant OSCE Partners for Cooperation, to introduce a moratorium on executions as a first step towards abolition.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA, SAN MARINO and the UNITED KINGDOM align themselves with this statement.

* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.