



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No.1492 Vienna, 17 October 2024

## EU Statement on European and World Day against the Death Penalty

1. On the occasion of the European and World Day against the Death Penalty, the European Union firmly reaffirms its unequivocal opposition to the death penalty, including its reintroduction, at all times, in all cases and in all circumstances. On 10 October 2024 and throughout 2025, World Day will be dedicated to challenging the misconception that the death penalty can make people and communities safer.
2. The death penalty is a cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, representing the ultimate denial of human dignity. It is contrary to the inalienable right to life enshrined in, *inter alia*, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It has been rightly identified as a moral affront and a barbaric practice that has no place in the twenty-first century and should be relegated to history.
3. The death penalty has no conclusive effect on deterring or reducing crime and makes miscarriages of justice irreversible. The discriminatory application of the death penalty, often after proceedings that do not meet international standards on the right to a fair trial and due process, can become a tool for instilling fear, repressing opposition, and quashing the legitimate exercise of human rights.
4. More than two thirds of the world's countries have abolished capital punishment in either law or in practice<sup>1</sup>. However, the global trend towards abolition must not be taken for granted. We will not tire of raising awareness of worrying developments regarding the use of this brutal and inhuman punishment and we

---

<sup>1</sup> [FactsFigures2024\\_EN\\_Final.pdf \(worldcoalition.org\)](#)

are committed to ensuring that the whole OSCE area becomes a death penalty-free zone.

5. Belarus is the only country in the continent in Europe that still carries out the death penalty. We remain deeply concerned about the legislative amendments that foresee the imposition of the death penalty based on vaguely defined penal provisions. Furthermore, we condemn the lack of transparency and fair trials, as highlighted in the Moscow Mechanism report of May 2023. We urge the Belarusian authorities to abolish the death penalty and, as a first step, to introduce a moratorium.

6. In the United States of America, while positive steps have been taken by several states in recent years, we regret that the U.S. federal government and 27 states still retain the death penalty. We encourage these states to impose moratoriums on executions and pass legislation to abolish capital punishment. We also call on the U.S. Congress to pass legislation abolishing the federal death penalty and urge the U.S. Administration to commute all federal death row sentences and stop pursuing new federal death sentences. Currently, more than 2,200 people are incarcerated on death row across the U.S. Additionally, more states are enacting secrecy laws to shield information about executions from the public and are implementing new execution methods, such as nitrogen hypoxia, which we find deeply concerning. Therefore, we call on the U.S. to introduce a moratorium on all executions.

7. The road to abolishing the death penalty requires joint efforts. We will continue our long-standing campaign against the death penalty, including within the OSCE. We therefore also call on relevant OSCE Partners for Cooperation to introduce a moratorium on executions and encourage those Partners who are on the cusp of ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aimed at abolishing the death penalty, to do so.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, SERBIA\*, ALBANIA\*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA\*, and GEORGIA, as well as ANDORRA, MONACO and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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