



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1338 Vienna, 7 October 2021

EU Statement on the execution of Ernest Johnson in the U.S. state of Missouri

1. It is with deep regret that the European Union learned that the execution of Ernest Johnson was carried out by the US State of Missouri on 5 October 2021.
2. This execution is in contradiction with the clear trend to dispense with the death penalty in the US where a growing majority of States have already abolished the death penalty or stopped using it. Moreover, in this case we are particularly disturbed that Ernest Johnson was executed despite reports that he was mentally impaired and despite several public appeals for his life to be spared due to mental illness, including from former Missouri Governor Bob Holden and Pope Francis. The application of the death penalty to mentally disabled and mentally ill persons is contrary to widely accepted human rights norms and to the minimum standards set forth in international human rights instruments.
3. The EU again 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.
4. 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 OSCE Partners for Cooperation, to introduce a moratorium on executions as a first step towards abolition. In this context, Attorney General Merrick Garland's order of 1 July 2021 to halt federal executions, pending the review of the Justice Department's policies and procedures, is promising.

The Candidate Countries the REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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