



United States Mission to the OSCE

On the executions of Gustavo Garcia and Travis Hittson

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 3, 2016

Thank you to our colleagues from the delegations of Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Mongolia, San Marino and Switzerland for raising their concerns. As they noted, on February 16, the State of Texas executed Gustavo Garcia for murdering Craig Turski in 1990. On February 17, the State of Georgia executed Travis Hittson for the 1992 murder of Conway Utterbeck.

Thank you also to the Holy See for raising its concerns. I listened carefully and understood a concern motivated by a commitment to the “dignity of man,” and that is certainly a basis for ongoing discussions between our delegations, not only in this Council but also bilaterally, and I would be happy to take forward that conversation – including for example on the condemnation of hate crimes for any reason, which we also see as grounded in the dignity of man.

The United States recognizes the debate on the death penalty both within and among nations. We respect the views of our friends around this table. We remind colleagues that the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which the United States is a party, provides for imposition of the death penalty for the most serious crimes when carried out pursuant to a final judgment rendered by a competent court, and accompanied by appropriate procedural safeguards and the observance of due process. This includes the right to seek pardon or commutation of sentence in all cases.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.