



## **EUROPEAN UNION**

### **OSCE Permanent Council No 1197 Vienna, 11 October 2018**

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#### **EU statement on European and World Day against the Death Penalty**

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On the occasion of the European and World Day against the Death Penalty, the EU wishes to reiterate its strong and unequivocal opposition to the use of the death penalty at all times and in all circumstances. The death penalty is cruel, inhuman and degrading in nature and makes any miscarriage of justice irreversible and fatal. Furthermore, the death penalty does not have any proven deterrent effect.

Therefore, the EU calls for universal abolition of the death penalty, including in all OSCE participating States and partner countries. Universal abolition contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and the progressive development of human rights. As a step towards universal abolition, the EU advocates for a global moratorium on the use of the death penalty.

The 7th World Congress against the Death Penalty will be co-hosted by the EU and Belgium in Brussels from 27 February until 1 March next year.

The EU also strongly calls on States not to reintroduce death penalty once it has been abolished or suspended. The scourge of terrorism affects all parts of the world, and the OSCE region is not an exception. However, the threat of terrorism cannot serve as a legal justification for the death penalty.

The EU will continue its long-standing campaign against the death penalty, including within the OSCE. We call on Belarus and the United States – the only two countries in the OSCE to maintain the death penalty in law and in practice – as well as relevant OSCE Partners for Cooperation to introduce a moratorium on executions as a first step towards full abolition. The EU is still concerned about the death penalty in Belarus which takes place without

transparency and in secrecy. Furthermore, the continued application of the death penalty runs counter to Belarus' stated willingness to engage with the international community, including the EU, on the matter. In the United States, we commend the majority of its States for having abolished death penalty in law or de facto and encourage the others to follow their example.

Even though more than two-thirds of all countries have abolished the death penalty by law or in practice, the trade in goods used for executions and torture by some States continues. To end this trade, the EU, Argentina and Mongolia launched the “Global Alliance for Torture-Free Trade” in September 2017. We encourage all States to support this initiative as a way to strengthen international cooperation in this area and share best practices.

Finally, the EU commends ODIHR's work in monitoring trends and new developments regarding human rights standards and practices among OSCE participating States related to the death penalty, and encourage all OSCE participating States to provide ODIHR with timely and relevant information.

Thank you.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF 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, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

\* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.