



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1071 Vienna, 15 October 2015

EU Statement to mark European and World Day against the Death Penalty

On 10th October, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini, on behalf of the European Union, and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe Thorbjørn Jagland, issued a joint statement to mark the European and World Day against the Death Penalty. The statement reiterated the European Union and the Council of Europe's strong opposition to capital punishment and emphasised that "the death penalty is inhuman and degrading treatment, does not have any proven significant deterrent effect, and allows judicial errors to become irreversible and fatal".

The European Union strongly and unequivocally opposes the death penalty at all times and in all circumstances, even when backed by due process in a democratic society. The abolition of the death penalty is a key objective for the EU's human rights policy. At this year's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, the European Union once again recommended that all States that still practice the death penalty, or who retain it in law, abolish it.

We are encouraged by the growing momentum towards abolition worldwide, both in law and in practice. To date, all but six OSCE participating States have abolished the death penalty, four of which are de facto abolitionist. Last December, a record number of countries – 117 – supported the fifth UN General Assembly resolution calling for a global moratorium on the use of the death penalty. We also note that, at HDIM this year, one additional OSCE delegation added its voice to those opposing the death penalty by clearly expressing that capital punishment is "unacceptable".

In addition, we welcome the adoption earlier this month of the Human Rights Council resolution on the question of the death penalty. This resolution contributes further to the notion that the use of the death penalty is incompatible with human dignity and the prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The European Union will continue its long-standing campaign against the death penalty, including within the OSCE, and we encourage Belarus and the United States to follow the global trend towards abolition.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ICELAND+ 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 and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.