



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1255 Vienna, 16 January 2020

EU Statement on death penalty in the OSCE area

1. The EU again reaffirms its strong and unequivocal opposition to the use of the death penalty at all times and in all circumstances.
2. 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. Capital punishment also fails to act as a deterrent to crime.
3. The EU calls for universal abolition of the death penalty. 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.
4. We call on Belarus and the United States as well as on those OSCE Partners for Cooperation that still maintain the death penalty in law and in practice, to follow the global trend towards abolition.
5. The EU is deeply worried about the secrecy and lack of transparency surrounding the use of the death penalty in Belarus, which leaves families of the convicted and the public in the dark. According to different sources, Aliaksandr Asipovich, convicted for a double homicide committed in 2018, has been executed on 17 December 2019.

6. The European Union takes every opportunity to recall to the Belarusian authorities its strong opposition to capital punishment in all circumstances, most recently at the EU-Belarus Coordination Group. Belarus is the only country in Europe still applying capital punishment.
7. The EU regrets that, last 10 January, two more death sentences were pronounced, for brothers Ilya and Stanislav Kostev. In 2019, three death sentences have been delivered and three executions have been carried out in Belarus. A total of four individuals are now on “death row”.
8. Last year, the EU made a statement in this Permanent Council regretting the announcement by the US Federal Government of its intention to resume capital punishment, after a de facto moratorium of 16 years. This decision runs counter to the growing trend to abolish the death penalty both in the United States and in the world.
9. In the United States, in March 2019, the Governor of California declared a moratorium on executions in the State. This was followed in May, by the abolition of the death penalty in New Hampshire. As a result, currently 21 States have abolished the Death Penalty and four have a moratorium in place. We regret, however, that last year, 22 people were executed in 7 States of the US and that death sentences continue to be handed down. We remain opposed to the death penalty in all cases, without exception.
10. The EU will continue its long-standing global campaign against the death penalty, including within the OSCE.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, as well as UKRAINE, GEORGIA, 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.