



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No 1209 Vienna, 13 December 2018

EU Statement on the Death Penalty

The EU again reaffirms 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 act as a deterrent to crime.

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.

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.

The EU remains deeply concerned about the continued lack of transparency surrounding the use of the death penalty in Belarus. It was recently brought to the public's attention that two new executions have taken place in secret in November 2018: those of Syamyon Berazhny and Ihar Hershankow. Altogether four executions have been carried out this year. Two more people remain on death row in Belarus.

The continued application of the death penalty runs counter to Belarus' stated willingness to engage with the international community, including the European Union and the Council of Europe, on the matter. The introduction by the Belarusian authorities of a moratorium on the use of the death penalty as a first step towards its abolition would be a positive development.

As per the Council Conclusions of February 2016, tangible steps taken by Belarus to respect universal human rights, including on the death penalty, are key for shaping the EU's future policy towards Belarus.

The EU will continue its long-standing campaign against the death penalty, including within the OSCE.

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.