



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1581 Vienna, 15 de October 2026

EU Statement on European and World Day against Death Penalty

1. On the occasion of the European and World Day against the Death Penalty, on 10 October, the European Union strongly reaffirms its unequivocal opposition to the capital punishment, including its reintroduction, at all times and in all circumstances.
2. The death penalty is a cruel, inhumane and degrading punishment, representing the ultimate denial of human dignity. It is incompatible with the inalienable right to life enshrined in, *inter alia*, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as subsequently reinforced by the adoption of international instruments aimed at its abolition and the development of international jurisprudence. It has no place in the twenty-first century and should be relegated to history. The European Union furthermore strongly condemns public executions, which are degrading and incompatible with the inherent dignity of the human person.
3. More than two-thirds of the world's countries have abolished capital punishment in either law or in practice. However, capital punishment persists in some parts of the world and has even escalated in a few countries, as highlighted by the High Representative/Vice-President of the European Commission and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe in a joint statement on 10 October.
4. We note with concern that Belarus has retained the death penalty—remaining the only country in Europe to do so. We remain deeply concerned about the legislative framework that foresees the imposition of the death penalty based on vaguely defined penal provisions. While noting that Belarusian democratic forces adopted on 17 June 2025 a Memorandum committing to the abolition of capital punishment, the EU urges the Belarusian authorities to follow suit by establishing a moratorium on executions.
5. We express deep concern that the United States not only retains the death penalty but has also expanded its use through legislative, doctrinal and practical developments, including its decision to lift the moratorium on federal executions and to revive the

federal death penalty, a trend that runs counter to the international movement towards abolition. The EU is also mindful of the serious concerns arising from the methods used to carry capital punishment, including the risk of severe pain and suffering, illustrated by very recent examples with botched recourse to lethal injections. These developments further underscore the fundamental unacceptability of the death penalty, irrespective of the method employed.

6. We call on all States, including OSCE participating States and Partners for Cooperation, that still retain the death penalty, to establish a moratorium on executions as a first step towards its full abolition, and to support the upcoming United Nations General Assembly resolution on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty. The EU will continue to advocate for a death penalty-free OSCE area and beyond.
7. The road to abolishing the death penalty requires joint efforts. We will continue our long-standing campaign against the death penalty, including within the OSCE.

Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, San Marino, and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.