



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1284 Vienna, 8 October 2020

EU Statement on the occasion of the European and World Day against the Death Penalty

On the occasion of the European and World day against the death penalty, marked on 10 October, the European Union reaffirms its strong and unequivocal opposition to the use of the death penalty at all times and under all circumstances.

The EU calls for the universal abolition of the death penalty and, as a step towards full abolition, advocates for a global moratorium on the use of the death penalty.

This year, the World day against the death penalty is dedicated to the right to effective legal representation for individuals who may face a death sentence. The death penalty disproportionately affects members of vulnerable groups, who cannot afford experienced defence layers, and death row prisoners continue to represent the most marginalized sections of society. Miscarriages of justice, inevitable in any judicial system, are irreversible.

The EU welcomes the decision of Kazakhstan to sign the second optional protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, strengthening its commitment to abolish the death penalty. We encourage Kazakhstan to take the final step by abolishing the death penalty in law for all crimes and ratifying the second optional protocol without reservations.

Capital punishment violates the inalienable right to life enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is incompatible with human dignity. The death penalty is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, and it does not serve as a deterrent to crime. The EU encourages all countries to join the global Alliance for Torture-Free trade, which was launched by the EU, Mongolia and Argentina in 2017 and currently involves over sixty States committed to restricting the trade in goods used to carry out torture and the death penalty.

The EU will continue its long-standing campaign against the death penalty, including within the OSCE. We call on the two participating States that still maintain the death penalty in law and in practice, as well as on relevant OSCE Partners for Cooperation, to introduce a moratorium on executions as a first step towards full abolition.

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, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, 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.