



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU Statement on European and World Day against the Death Penalty

On the occasion of the European and World Day against the Death Penalty, marked annually on October the 10th, the European Union strongly reaffirms its unequivocal opposition to the capital punishment, including its reintroduction, at all times, in all cases and in all circumstances.

The death penalty is a cruel, inhumane and degrading punishment, representing the ultimate denial of human dignity. It is contrary to the inalienable right to life enshrined in, *inter alia*, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It has no place in the twenty-first century and should be relegated to history.

As the High Representative/Vice-President of the European Union and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe stated in a joint statement on this occasion, *“Proponents of the death penalty often base their argument on deterrence. However, studies consistently show that states with capital punishment do not have lower crime rates than those without. The death penalty also makes miscarriages of justice irreversible and any reformation and social rehabilitation impossible”*. Furthermore, when applied in a discriminatory way, the death penalty can become a tool for instilling fear, repressing opposition, and quashing the exercise of human rights. People continue to be executed following unfair trials, after having been subjected to torture and other forms of ill-treatment, including, for crimes that do not involve intentional killing.

More than two thirds of the world's countries have abolished capital punishment in either law or in practice. However, the global trend towards abolition must not be taken for granted. That's why the European Union calls on those few remaining States, including OSCE participating States and Partners for Cooperation, that still carry out death sentences, to introduce a legal moratorium as a first step towards full abolition. We encourage those countries who haven't done so to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aimed at abolishing the death penalty. We will not tire of raising awareness of worrying developments regarding the use of this brutal and inhumane punishment and we are committed to ensuring that the whole OSCE area becomes a death penalty-free zone.

Belarus is the only country in Europe that still carries out the death penalty. We remain deeply concerned about the legislative framework that foresees the imposition of the death penalty based on vaguely defined penal provisions.

In the United States, we regret that the federal government and many states still retain the death penalty. We express deep concern about the decision to revive the federal death penalty and lift the moratorium on federal executions.

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, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, San Marino and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.