



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to EU on Abolition of the Death Penalty in Maryland

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 9, 2013

On Thursday, May 2, Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley signed a bill into law which replaces the death penalty with the punishment of life imprisonment without parole.

We thank the EU and other participating States for their interest in this issue. The use of the death penalty in the United States is a decision appropriately addressed through democratically elected processes at the federal and state levels and is not prohibited by international law, nor is it inconsistent with any OSCE commitments.

The United States recognizes the intense debate on the issue of the death penalty both within and among nations. As we have said many times in prior meetings of the Permanent Council when the subject of capital punishment is raised, the ultimate decision regarding this issue must be made through the domestic democratic processes of individual states, as it was the case in Maryland, and be consistent with their obligations under international law.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.