



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council No.1447
Vienna, 19 October 2023**

**EU Statement on the European and World Day against
the Death Penalty**

1. On the occasion of the 10th October European and World Day against the Death Penalty, we recall the joint statement issued by the EU High Representative on behalf of the European Union, and the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe firmly reaffirming our unequivocal opposition to the death penalty, including any reintroduction of it – at all times, in all places and in all circumstances.
2. The death penalty is contrary to the inalienable right to life enshrined in, inter alia, the UDHR. It is profoundly difficult to reconcile with human dignity . It is an inhuman, cruel, and degrading punishment, representing the ultimate denial of human dignity. It does not have a deterrent effect on crime. And it is, tragically, irreversible should any miscarriage of justice occurs.
3. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the entry into force of Protocol No. 13 to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), concerning the abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances. We welcome the ratification of Protocol No. 13 by the National Assembly of Armenia and its signature by Azerbaijan and encourage both member states to swiftly complete the ratification process.
4. Although the world continues to move away from the death penalty, with more than two thirds of the world's countries having abolished capital punishment in either law or practice, the OSCE area faces worrying trends regarding the use of this cruel, inhuman and ineffective punishment. Belarus remains the only country in Europe that still applies the capital punishment. We strongly condemn the

widening of the scope for the use of capital punishment by the Lukashenka regime. It is deeply regrettable that capital punishment provisions have been extended for the second time in less than one year, this time authorising the death penalty for civil servants and army personnel convicted of “high treason”, as referred to by the 2022 ODIHR background paper on the Death Penalty in the OSCE Area.

5. According to the OHCHR report of March 2023, evidence shows a widespread pattern of summary executions in areas that Russian armed forces controlled in 17 localities of Ukraine, particularly of civilian detainees. In this regard, the EU will continue to support all accountability efforts, in the OSCE and beyond.

6. The EU also regrets that executions have continued to be carried out in 2022 and 2023 in the United States and recommends the introduction of a moratorium on executions as a first step towards full abolition.

7. We call on all retentionist States to promote an open and democratic debate towards the abolition of the death penalty, to improve transparency and access to accurate information on procedure, policy, and practice. We call on governments of all abolitionist countries to send a clear message that capital punishment will not return in their domestic penal systems.

8. Civil society remains at the forefront of the global fight against the death penalty. Therefore, the EU has taken a decision to further strengthen our partnerships with civil society in the framework of a Global Consortium for Death Penalty Abolition, led by the World Coalition against the Death Penalty. On this important day, we commend all those lawyers, human rights defenders, academics, politicians, and individuals who continue to work tirelessly for human dignity, human rights and to put an end to the death penalty once and for all.

9. The EU is determined to continue its longstanding global campaign against the death penalty and reiterates its call for universal abolition. We urge the few remaining participating States still retaining it to take all necessary steps towards its full abolition.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, the Potential Candidate Country GEORGIA, and the EFTA country ICELAND, member of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA, MONACO and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.