



1447th Permanent Council of the OSCE, 19th October 2023

Current issue: World Day against the Death Penalty – Joint Statement

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of Andorra, Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, San Marino, the United Kingdom and my own country Switzerland.

Nine days ago we observed the 21st World Day against the Death Penalty, which commemorates our collective efforts in the fight against the death penalty and the achievements and progress made in recent years.

We welcome the continuing trend towards universal abolition of the death penalty. Today, 113 countries worldwide have abolished the death penalty completely, and more than two-thirds of the world's countries have abolished it in law or practice. We are pleased that one more state, Ghana, has joined the abolitionist movement this year, and we now encourage Ghana to join us in signing the second optional protocol of the international covenant on civil and political rights. Furthermore, we welcome the recent decision of the National Assembly of Armenia to ratify Protocol No. 13 to the European Convention on Human Rights, which provides for the abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances, including during times of war or imminent threat of war.

At the same time, two OSCE participating States continue to apply the death penalty: Belarus and the United States. Despite repeated calls for its abolition, Belarus remains the only country in Europe and Central Asia to use the capital punishment. Moreover, the use of the death penalty has been extended twice in the last two years, contrary to the country's international obligations. We deeply deplore the recent expansion of the use of the death penalty and urge Belarus to reverse this trend and abolish the death penalty as soon as possible.

Mr. Chair,

We stand firmly against the use of capital punishment at all times and under any circumstances. The death penalty is not consistent with human rights, including the right to life. The evidence is clear, it does not serve the prevention of crime, violence and violent extremism, as it is not proven to be a greater deterrent to potential offenders than other severe punishments

We call on all states, within the OSCE and beyond, to join the global movement against the death penalty and, in the meantime, to establish a formal moratorium on executions. We also encourage all states to support the resolution on the question of the death penalty that was negotiated at the 54th session of the Human Rights Council.

In addition to state action, we encourage civil society, political leaders, NGOs, lawyers, local representatives, parliamentarians, reporters, religious leaders and citizens to take action against the death penalty on October 10th and every day. The Warsaw Human Dimension Conference once again demonstrated the important contribution of civil society actors in the campaign for the universal abolition of the death penalty. Their work has been crucial to the progress made so far.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.