



## PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

### STATEMENT BY NORWAY

As delivered by counsellor Hilde Austad

to the 2013 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, Warsaw 2 October 2013.

Working Session 15: Rule of law

Thank you, Madame Moderator,

Let me first express our support for the EU statement, which reflects the views also of my government. I will therefore focus on only one of the topics on our agenda, the question of abolition of capital punishment.

Madame Moderator,

The choice whether to abolish or retain the death penalty is in fact a choice about the kind of society we want to live in and the values we want to uphold.

The decision to abolish the death penalty requires principled political leadership from heads of state, governments and others in position of power. Norway and other abolitionist states will continue to provide encouragement and support to those states that have not yet abolished.

The trend is going in the right direction. Today, an estimated 150 UN Member States have abolished the death penalty or introduced a moratorium, either in law or practice. There are countries that have chosen to abolish the death penalty in all geographical regions, both rich and poor countries, of all cultures, all values, of all traditions and of all religions.

Madame Moderator,

As a strong believer in multi-stakeholder initiatives, we were proud to be one of the main supporters and sponsors of the Fifth World Congress against the Death Penalty, which met in Madrid in June. Participation from 91 countries and more than 1500 people from abolitionist and retentionist countries demonstrates the growing support for abolition worldwide.

We are also encouraged by the success of the International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP), founded in 2010 to supplement the actions carried out by country representatives, international and regional organisations and civil society. It has been an honour to support and assist the ICDP this past year as president of the ICDP cross-regional support group. In May, when the ICDP met in Oslo, it launched a publication which reviews the process towards abolition in 13 countries, representing all regions of the world. There are a number of steps which states can take to abolish the death penalty, and this report gives us important guidance and describes lessons learned.

Madame Moderator,

The global momentum is shifting towards abolition. If we are to make sure that we continue in the right direction, we need to continue to commit ourselves to the task. That is also why we need an OSCE commitment to stop this inhumane practice.

Norway remains committed – and we urge those two participating states that still practice this penalty to do what must be done to stop executing people. Norway welcomes the fact that eighteen US states now have abolished capital punishment and that others are moving in that direction. We hope that this trend will continue and also encourage the removal of the federal death penalty.

The death penalty belongs to the past, not to the modern world. That is why it is time for Belarus and the US to pledge your willingness to join a consensus in the OSCE. The death penalty must be abolished.

Thank you, Madame Moderator