



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION OF
THE WORLD DAY AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY

Delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 11 October 2018

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chair,

I am speaking on behalf of Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Mongolia, Switzerland and Norway.

Only two participating States retain the death penalty in both law and in practice. In addition, three more maintain the death penalty in law, but have suspended executions. In our region, in three participating States, more than 2 700 persons are known to be under a sentence of death.

Yesterday, the World Day Against the Death Penalty highlighted living conditions for prisoners on death row. In the worst cases, the conditions of detention of persons sentenced to death constitute a violation of the prohibition against torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. We must recognize that perpetrators of even the most heinous crimes remain under the protection of basic human rights. These rights apply to everyone, every day regardless of circumstance, also on death row. Detention on death row must be fully rights compliant, just as everywhere else.

The death penalty in itself is more than problematic. It is a form of punishment incompatible with human rights and human dignity. It is irreversible with an inherent risk of perpetuating the miscarriage of justice. No state should allow this risk. Moreover, it is well documented that capital punishment does not itself deter crime.

We oppose the death penalty in all cases and without exception. We call on states to suspend all executions and take immediate steps towards abolition. We also urge all states to vote in favour of the UN resolution calling for a universal moratorium on the use of capital punishment in New York this autumn. There is a global trend to move away from the death penalty. Our region should be free from it.

Thank you