



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT ON THE WORLD DAY AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY

Delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 10 October 2019

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Chair,

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

Today, the World Day Against the Death Penalty puts special emphasis on the children of those sentenced to death or executed, as 2019 also marks the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. When children lose their parents at the hands of the state, they are unseen victims of a cruel form of punishment that should be banned throughout the world. The trauma that children may experience can manifest itself both before and after an execution, and can amount to a violation of their human rights.

In the OSCE, only Belarus and the United States of America retain the death penalty in both law and in practice. In addition, three more participating States maintain the death penalty in law, but have suspended executions.

We oppose the death penalty in all cases without exception. It is incompatible with human rights and human dignity. It does not deter crime, and it is irreversible. States that retain the death penalty risk perpetuating the miscarriage of justice. Wrongful conviction is a regrettable, but inherent, risk of every criminal justice system. Execution of the innocent need not be and should not be.

We call on Belarus and the United States of America to suspend all executions and take immediate steps towards abolition. They should join the global trend to move away from the death penalty. More than two out of three countries worldwide have abolished capital punishment by law or in practice. Last year, a record high number of states adopted the UN resolution on a moratorium on the death penalty. The OSCE region deserves to be free of this form of punishment.

Thank you.