



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY  
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT ON THE ABOLISHMENT OF  
THE DEATH PENALTY IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

Delivered by Minister Counsellor Henning Hj. Johansen to the Permanent Council  
Vienna, 6 June 2019

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

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

On 20 May, New Hampshire became the 21<sup>st</sup> state in the United States of America to abolish the death penalty, when the state legislature succeeded in overriding the governor's veto of an abolishment bill. This is a welcome step towards abolishing the death penalty in the United States.

While four states have imposed gubernatorial moratoria on executions, the remaining 25 states, as well as the federal government and its military, maintain the death penalty in law and in practice. Since we last raised the issue of the death penalty in the United States, on 28 March, six executions have been carried out. The State of Alabama has executed two individuals. The states of Texas, Georgia, Tennessee, and Florida have each executed one individual. Nine executions have been carried out in the United States of America this year.

We oppose the death penalty in all cases and without exception. We consider the death penalty to be a cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, incompatible with human rights and human dignity. It is also irreversible. In retaining the death penalty, states risk perpetuating the miscarriage of justice. The inherent risk of mistake in all criminal justice systems sometimes leads to wrongful conviction, and execution, of innocent people. Moreover, it is well documented that capital punishment does not itself deter crime.

More than two out of three countries worldwide have abolished the death penalty by law or in practice. On 13 November last year, the United Nations adopted a resolution on a moratorium against the death penalty with a record high 123 states voting in favour. Of the OSCE participating states, only the United States voted against. The vote demonstrated the growing global trend to move away from the use of the death penalty.

We continue to call on the two participating States that retain the death penalty, the United States of America and Belarus, to suspend all executions, take immediate, further steps towards abolition, and join our efforts to free our region of the death penalty.

Thank you