



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT ON THE DEATH PENALTY IN
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND BELARUS
Delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 14 June 2018

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

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

Three OSCE participating States maintain the death penalty in law, but have moratoriums on executions. Two participating States, the United States and Belarus, retain the death penalty in both law and in practice.

Since we last raised this issue on 15 March, five executions have been carried out in the United States. On 27 March, 25 April and 16 May, the State of Texas executed Rosendro Rodriguez III, Erick Daniel Davila and Juan Castillo respectively. On 19 April, the State of Alabama carried out the death sentence of Walter Leroy Moody. On 4 May, the State of Georgia executed Robert Earl Butts, Jr. All were executed by lethal injection. In Belarus, in mid-May, Viktor Lyotaw and Alyaksey Mikhalenya were reportedly executed in secret.

Our countries 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. The inherent risk of mistake in all criminal justice systems shows the willingness of retentionist States to risk perpetuating the miscarriage of justice through the application of the death penalty. Innocent people are at times wrongfully convicted and executed. Moreover, it is well documented that capital punishment does not itself deter crime.

There is a global trend to move away from the use of the death penalty, and more than two out of three countries worldwide have now abolished the death penalty by law or in practice.

We strongly urge the United States and Belarus to suspend all executions, take immediate steps towards abolition, and join our efforts to free our region of the death penalty.