

Justice that kills is not justice. Convinced of the inherent inhumanity of the death penalty, the 42 countries represented here oppose its use under any circumstances anywhere in the world. The death penalty is not only an intolerable affront to human dignity, its use goes hand in hand with numerous violations of the human rights of the condemned and their families. Moreover, capital punishment has no positive impact on crime prevention or security and does not in any way repair the harm done to the victims and their families. Armed with these convictions, we take the opportunity presented by the 11th World Day against the Death Penalty to reiterate our unrelenting dedication to the abolition movement in Europe and all over the world.

The aim of our appeal is not to deliver a lecture, but to share our experience as well as our conviction. If the history of the abolition of the death penalty in our various countries has taught us anything, it is that the path is long and hard. Capital punishment was not repealed overnight. Its abolition became a reality only as a result of increasing awareness and constant collective effort. It was through perseverance and in gradual stages that the number of executions fell, the list of crimes punishable by death was narrowed, justice became more transparent, de facto moratoriums on executions were established and that – finally – the death penalty disappeared. It is this process that countries that still carry out executions in the name of justice must go through.

The determination needed to achieve abolition of the death penalty must come from states as well as from individuals, and this is also the message of today's joint appeal. The path to the abolition of the death penalty was not taken by closed societies or countries cut off from the rest of the world. That the death penalty has been all but abolished in Europe today is thanks to informed debate and a fluid exchange of ideas between our countries and societies.

The Council of Europe and the European Convention on Human Rights have acted as catalysts for this regional trend away from the death penalty, and have even allowed it to spread further afield. The entry into force of Protocol 13 to the said convention (*Protocol concerning the abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances*) 10 years ago is a prime example. Today, we represent 42 of the 44 states that have ratified Protocol 13 and urge all of the member states of the Council of Europe who have not yet done so to join us. We strongly urge the last State in Europe still applying the capital punishment to join a global moratorium on the death penalty as a first step towards its abolition.

The case of Europe illustrates the fundamental role played by regional and multilateral organizations in advancing the cause of abolition. The abolition of the death penalty in many American, African and Asian states exemplifies the universal character of this fight. It also demonstrates the need for a strong political signal, as well as the participation of the whole of society in these efforts. In this spirit, we must use the momentum of the 5th World Congress against the death penalty which took place in Madrid in June this year. We recall these principles today because we are entering a crucial phase in the process of abolishing the death penalty worldwide. Today, only about 50 countries still allow capital punishment, whereas twenty years ago it was almost twice as many. As the resolutions of the United Nations show, a growing majority of States support the establishment of a universal moratorium on death penalty. This positive trend allows us to imagine the next generations to live in a world without capital punishment and spurs us on in our common efforts to support countries on the path to its universal abolition.

This joint call to abolish the death penalty is signed by the following ministers of foreign affairs:

Ditmir Bushati (Albania), Gilbert Saboya Sunyé (Andorra), Michael Spindelegger (Austria), Didier Reynders (Belgium), Zlatko Lagumdžija (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Kristian Vigenin (Bulgaria), Vesna Pusić (Croatia), Ioannis Kasoulides (Cyprus), Jan Kohout (Czech Republic), Villy Søvndal (Denmark), Urmas Paet (Estonia), Erkki Tuomioja (Finland), Laurent Fabius (France), Nikola Poposki (FYR Macedonia), Guido Westerwelle (Germany), Evangelos Venizelos (Greece), János Martonyi (Hungary), Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson (Iceland), Eamon Gilmore (Ireland), Emma Bonino (Italy), Edgars Rinkēvičs (Latvia), Aurelia Frick (Liechtenstein), Linas Antanas Linkevičius (Lithuania), Jean Asselborn (Luxembourg), George Vella (Malta), Natalia Gherman (Moldova), José Badia (Monaco), Igor Lukšić (Montenegro), Frans Timmermans (Netherlands), Espen Barth Eide (Norway), Rui Machete (Portugal), Titus Corlăţean (Romania), Pasquale Valentini (San Marino), Ivan Mrkić (Serbia), Miroslav Lajčák (Slovakia), Karl Erjavec (Slovenia), José Manuel García-Margallo (Spain), Carl Bildt (Sweden), Didier Burkhalter (Switzerland), Ahmet Davutoğlu (Turkey), Leonid Kozhara (Ukraine) and William Hague (United Kingdom).