



1309th Permanent Council of the OSCE, 15th April 2021

Abolition of the Death Penalty in the State of Virginia, USA

Statement by Switzerland

Madam Chair,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

We welcome the recent decision by the state of Virginia to abolish the death penalty. This makes Virginia the 23rd US state to get rid of capital punishment.

This step is another confirmation of the global momentum towards the abolition of the death penalty. Whereas the use of capital punishment was widespread a few decades ago, we are pleased to see that it is now becoming the exception. We also would like to take this opportunity to welcome the pledge by US President Biden to work to end capital punishment at the federal level, and we hope to see this materialize as soon as possible.

We will remain committed to the universal abolition of capital punishment and categorically reject the application of the death penalty under all circumstances and everywhere. We are convinced that capital punishment is not only contrary to the right to life, but is also discriminatory and constitutes cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. It also seriously violates human dignity and has no proven deterrent effect.

Finally, we take the opportunity of this issue being on the agenda of today's PC to reiterate our call on Belarus and the United States of America, the two participating

States which still maintain the death penalty, to immediately suspend all executions and to take steps towards full abolition in the OSCE region.

Thank you, Madam Chair.