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Belgium reaffirms its global leadership for a world without the death penalty

Ahead of the 23rd European and World Day Against the Death Penalty (10/10), the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted a resolution sponsored by Belgium on the issue of the death penalty. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Development Cooperation Maxime Prévot welcomes this adoption.

This initiative, presented jointly with Benin, Costa Rica, France, Mexico, Mongolia, the Republic of Moldova and Switzerland, was supported by 31 countries from five continents. This is an important moment to highlight the global commitment against the death penalty. This initiative also demonstrates Belgium's dynamism in favour of the protection and promotion of human rights.

Presented every two years, this resolution aims to put the death penalty at the top of the agenda by addressing it from a human rights perspective. Indeed, the death penalty is not only a violation of the right to life itself, but its application also raises a whole series of questions relating to other human rights.

This year, the theme highlighted in the resolution is "equality of arms", i.e. the right of every person to be defended in court on an equal footing with the opposing party. In particular, the resolution urges States to comply with international standards guaranteeing the protection of the human rights of persons facing the death penalty, to ensure that all persons are equal before the courts and that the guarantees of the right to a fair trial and equality of arms are ensured for all parties in death penalty cases.

10 October 2025 will mark the 23rd European and World Day Against the Death Penalty. For the second consecutive year, this day represents a crucial opportunity to combat the misconception that the death penalty can make individuals and communities safer.

On the contrary, the death penalty protects neither individuals nor societies: it threatens human dignity and reinforces social and economic disparities, disproportionately affecting marginalised groups.

On this international day, Belgium calls on all stakeholders to join the global abolitionist movement and to mobilise in support of the call for the universal abolition of the death penalty.

"The death penalty is not just a question of justice, it is a question of humanity. Every execution is a collective failure, a breach of what we hold most dear: human dignity. As Belgians, we firmly believe that no state should take the life of a human being, whatever the circumstances. I want to reiterate today, with force and with heart: a more just society is not built on fear or revenge, but on dignity, rehabilitation and hope," said Minister Maxime Prévot.

"The fight against the death penalty has long been a priority for our country, and Belgium's commitment to abolishing the death penalty is not limited to a single day each year. It is a long-term effort on several fronts. Just recently, in February 2025, I took part in a round table discussion on the death penalty at the Human Rights Council, where I spoke on behalf of the eight countries to explicitly reaffirm our opposition to the death penalty in all cases and under all circumstances, regardless of the crime committed."

After Brussels in 2019 and Berlin in 2022, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Development Cooperation Maxime Prévot is delighted that the 9th World Congress Against the



Death Penalty will be held in Paris from 30 June to 3 July 2026. This highlight of the global abolitionist movement will provide momentum to continue efforts thanks to the advice and best practices gathered within the abolitionist community.

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