**Draft Joint Statement by lawyers’ organisations calling for the universal abolition of the death penalty**

**Background information**

Following the recent [decision](https://rm.coe.int/4th-summit-of-heads-of-state-and-government-of-the-council-of-europe/1680ab40c1) taken by the Heads of State and Government at the Reykjavik Summit, held on 16-17 May 2023 to strengthen the Council of Europe's work on the abolition of the death penalty (the Reykjavik Declaration recalls that "the Council of Europe has played a crucial role in making Europe a death penalty-free zone" and states that "it must continue the fight against its reintroduction and in favour of its universal abolition, in all places and all circumstances"), the CCBE was contacted by the Council of Europe, under the MoU of cooperation between our two organisations, to support the Council of Europe’s work in this regard. Following a meeting between both Secretariats, it was suggested that the CCBE could work on a draft joint Statement for the universal abolition of the death penalty for which the CCBE would ask the support of other regional and international lawyers’ organisations.

The Human Rights Committee was therefore invited to discuss this proposal.

At the meeting of the Human Rights Committee on 28 March 2024, the Committee agreed that the CCBE should work on a draft joint Statement for the abolition of the death penalty for which the CCBE would ask the support of other regional and international lawyers’ organisations. The reason for that is that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve the universal abolition of the death penalty. Asking the support of other European and non-European lawyers’ organisations would therefore support this objective of universal abolition. The aim would be to publish it on 10 October on the occasion of the European and World Day against the Death Penalty.

It was therefore agreed with the Human Rights Committee to aim at having the draft joint statement for approval at the Plenary Session in May in order to have sufficient time to get the support of other lawyers’ organisations.

Delegations are therefore invited to vote on the draft statement here below, which will then, if approved, be circulated for cosignature to other regional and international lawyers’ organisations.

**Draft Joint Statement by lawyers’ organisations calling for the universal abolition of the death penalty**

*To be published on 10 October 2024 on the occasion of the European and World Day against the Death Penalty*

As representatives of the profession of lawyer in various parts of the world, committed to the promotion and protection of human rights and the rule of law, the undersigned organisations join voices in a unified call for the universal abolition of the death penalty, recognising the inherent dignity of every individual and the fundamental right to life.

The right to life is guaranteed by all major international and regional human rights treaties, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 3), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 6), the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, the European Convention on Human Rights (Article 2), Protocol No. 6 to the European Convention on Human Rights abolishes the death penalty in peacetime and Protocol No. 13 to the European Convention on Human Rights concerning the abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances .

The death penalty is irreversible, prone to error, and has the potential to disproportionately affect marginalised and vulnerable communities. Its application is therefore not only incompatible with the values enshrined in various international human rights legal instruments, but it also undermines the pursuit of justice and the advancement of a fair and humane legal system.

The death penalty does not fulfill what should be the primary objective of sentencing in criminal proceedings, which is to reintegrate individuals into society. Moreover, evidence does not support the idea that the death penalty serves as an effective deterrent against crime.

In this context, the undersigned organisations remain deeply concerned about the persistence of the death penalty in many countries around the world, as well as its possible resurgence in some countries where it has been abolished.

The undersigned organisations strongly believe that the abolition of the death penalty is not only a crucial step towards building a world where the inherent worth of every individual is respected, and justice is pursued in a manner that upholds the principles of fairness, humanity, and the rule of law, but also contributes to the fostering and protection of human dignity and the gradual development of a global culture of human rights. The undersigned organisations, therefore, urge all countries where the death penalty still exists to abolish it or at least impose a moratorium on it, and to adhere fully to the right to life. Furthermore, the undersigned organisations urge all countries that have adopted a moratorium on the death penalty to continue applying it and not to revoke it.

Additionally, the undersigned organisations encourage authorities and all relevant actors of society to engage in constructive dialogues, share best practices, and support one another in the pursuit of alternative, humane, and effective measures to address crime and protect society in a manner consistent with the protection and promotion of the rule of law.