

INVITATION TO THE SIDE EVENT

**Combating Torture and Abolishing the Death Penalty in the OSCE Region:  
Two sides of the same coin?**

**Friday 11 April 2014, 8.30 – 10.00 am**

Ratsaal

Helsinki 2008, Ministerial Declaration on the Occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Universal declaration of Human Rights: “We stress that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person (...) no one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”

To date, all but six participating States of the OSCE have abolished the death penalty. Executions are carried out in two participating States while four participating States are de facto abolitionist. Recent developments in the OSCE area include the abolition of the death penalty by Connecticut (2012), Maryland (2013), a moratorium in Washington DC (2014) US, and the ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR by Mongolia on March 13, 2012. Legal interpretations on the death penalty have evolved since the OSCE Copenhagen 1990 Commitments where the participating States committed “to exchange information (...) on the question of the abolition of the death penalty”. The UN General Assembly adopted several resolutions calling for a moratorium on the death penalty with a view to its universal abolition.

Does a State violate international commitments relating to right to life and the prohibition on torture when it continues to apply the death penalty? Is it possible to impose the death penalty without causing severe physical pain or suffering? Is the death penalty respectful of the inherent dignity of the human person? In view of the evolving debate on the death penalty, is there a need to update our OSCE commitments on this topic? These are some of the questions that the panel of civil society actors and representatives of international organizations will address in this side event.

*Light breakfast will be offered.*

**Speakers:**

- the UN Special rapporteur on Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment, *Mr Juan E. MENDEZ* (video-message)
- *Ms Ioanna KUÇURADI*, member of the International Commission against Death Penalty
- *Mr Nicolas PERRON*, Ensemble contre la peine de mort
- *Mr Childerik SCHAAPVELD*, Head of the Council of Europe Office in Vienna

**Moderator:** *M. Snjezana BOKULIC*, Head of the Human Rights Department, ODIHR/OSCE

**Co-Sponsors:**

