

EXTERNAL

12 April 1994

Sergei Krylov

Republic of Estonia

Amnesty International has only recently learned that Sergei Krylov was sentenced to death by Laane-Viru County Court on 18 May 1993. The sentence was confirmed by the State Court on 19 August. Sergei Krylov, who had a previous conviction for murder, was found guilty of the murder of a pensioner.

Sergei Krylov is understood to have submitted an appeal for clemency but no decision has yet been made.

Background information about the death penalty in Estonia

The death penalty is retained in Estonia for three crimes: aggravated murder, assassination and acts of terrorism. Seven people, in addition to Sergei Krylov, are known to have been sentenced to death since July 1988, all for the crime of premeditated murder under aggravated circumstances. Four people have been granted clemency and one person - Rein Oruste - was executed in September 1991. Amnesty International is appealing for the commutation of the other death sentences believed to be still pending - those of Ruben Melkonjan and Vassili Otshtalenko.

Petitions for clemency are heard by the President of the Republic of Estonia. The President receives recommendations on whether the death sentence should be commuted from the Clemency Commission, composed of four members of the Estonian Parliament, the Chairman of the State Court, the Procurator General and the Minister of Justice. Execution is by shooting.

In May 1993 Estonia became a member of the Council of Europe and at the same time signed the European Convention on Human Rights, together with its Sixth Protocol concerning abolition of the death penalty. By signing the Sixth Protocol, Estonia has taken a significant step towards the complete abolition of the death penalty. Both the European Convention and its Sixth Protocol still have to be ratified by the Estonian parliament, which is also expected to approve a new criminal code in the near future.

Amnesty International has consistently pressed the Estonian authorities to review the use of the death penalty as a step towards its abolition and to impose a moratorium on death sentences and executions until an exhaustive review of the death penalty has taken place.