

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

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Council of Europe: Amnesty International welcomes the opening for signature of instrument banning the death penalty in all circumstances

Today, Protocol No. 13 to the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms -- which bans the death penalty in all circumstances -- opens for signature to Council of Europe member states in Vilnius, Lithuania, during a meeting of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

Amnesty International welcomes Protocol No. 13 as an important step towards making the Council of Europe a totally death penalty-free zone. The organization calls on Council of Europe member states to sign and ratify Protocol No. 13 as soon as possible, thereby sending a clear political message that the death penalty is completely unacceptable at all times.

Protocol No. 13 -- which was adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 February -- closes the gap left under Protocol No. 6 to the ECHR, which prohibits the death penalty except for acts committed in times of war or imminent danger of war in those states that have agreed to be bound by it.

Amnesty International urges in particular those Council of Europe member states, which are parties to the ECHR, who have not yet ratified Protocol No. 6 -- that is Armenia, Russia and Turkey -- to ratify both Protocols and thereby demonstrate their opposition to capital punishment.

Protocol No. 13 will apply to those members states of the Council of Europe which ratify it, and will enter into force three months after the date on which ten member states agree to be bound by it.

Public Document

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