

## **7<sup>th</sup> World Congress Against the Death Penalty**

Video Message by Cecilia Malmström

European Commissioner for Trade

Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm sorry I can't be with you today.

Capital punishment is the epitome of cruelty and inhumanity.

Every day people are executed and sentenced to death.

They die by hanging, shooting, beheading, stoning, electrocution, lethal injection or the gas chamber.

Some committed terrible crimes,

and others die for things that should not even be illegal in the first place.

Some are adults with families and children,

and some are not even 18 years old when they were sentenced.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century you can be executed for:

- political protests
- accusations of adultery
- your sexuality

This is what the death penalty looks like in 2019.

It is unjustifiable.

A relic of a darker part of humanity.

When we seek to make a change in the world,

we cannot change everything at once.

Instead, we make many small impacts in many places.

This is how real change happens.

The death penalty is against our fundamental values as Europeans.

When it comes to fighting it, trade policy must do its part too.

The death penalty does not just happen –

it has to be facilitated.

Chemicals, equipment and other materials must be used.

Banning these instruments will not bring an end to the death penalty,

but it will make the executioner's life more difficult.

In the EU we have already banned the sale and export of these goods since 2005.

Despite growing international cooperation, the tools used to execute people are traded across the globe like any other commodity.

Global challenges need global solutions.

The EU can no longer operate alone.

A coordinated international effort is required.

**And that is why the EU, together with Argentina and Mongolia launched in 2017 a Global Alliance to end trade in products used for torture and capital punishment.**

In September last year, more than 60 countries in the Alliance agreed to prepare the work for concluding an international instrument negotiated on a non-discriminatory, transparent and multilateral basis, to establish common international standards for the import, export and transfer of goods used for capital punishment, torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

A society that tolerates the death penalty cannot claim to respect human rights.

It is our duty to end this terrible practice –

not just as Europeans, but as human beings.

I wish you a successful conference. Thanks for listening.