



Press Release
Abolition of Death Penalty Project, Suriname

A seminar took place in Paramaribo from 2-6 February 2015 on the abolition of the death penalty in Suriname. The seminar was organized by the European Union and several Member States, namely the United Kingdom, France and the Netherlands, and was implemented by the Stichting Juridische Samenwerking Suriname Nederland. The keynote speaker was Emeritus Professor of the Constitutional Court of Belgium, Professor Marc Bossuyt, who is an expert in the field of human rights. The seminar included sessions with civil society, legal experts and political representatives from the National Assembly, and discussed the adoption of the UN Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights to Abolish the Death Penalty.

The European Union and its Member States welcomed the dialogue on the abolition of the death penalty in Suriname and the process of adoption of its new draft penal code which includes abolition of death penalty and encourage Suriname to ratify the two protocols mentioned above. This would be a logical and progressive development given that Suriname has not utilized the death penalty since 1927, and following Suriname's vote in favour of the 18 December 2014 United Nations General Assembly resolution calling for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty with a view to abolition.

The European Union is the world's leading institutional actor in the fight against the death penalty and its action in this area represents a key priority of its external human rights policy. Experience in Europe and other parts of the world has taught us that the death penalty does not prevent an increase in violent crime, nor does it bring justice to the victims of such crimes. Imposition of the death penalty contravenes the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment. Any miscarriage of justice – which is inevitable in any legal system – could lead to innocent persons being killed and is irreversible.