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Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas
on behalf of the European Commission
(2.3.2026)

The death penalty bill discussed in the National Security Committee of the Knesset is deeply concerning. The EU opposes capital punishment in all cases and all circumstances and considers that it violates the right to life and the right to be free from torture and other ill-treatment.

Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by Israel, imposes strict limitations including by guaranteeing a fair trial and provides that ‘nothing in this article shall be invoked to delay or to prevent the abolition of capital punishment by any State Party to the present Covenant’¹.

Adopting the law would mean that Israel would be retrogressing on its previously principled position with respect to capital punishment and going against the worldwide abolitionist trend. It would also place Israel at odds with its obligations under international law, including due to its discriminatory character and the lack of procedural safeguards.

The EU has conducted repeated outreach to the Israeli authorities both locally and in Brussels to raise the issues associated with the death penalty bill and underline the EU’s principled positions on this matter.

Israel has long upheld a *de facto* moratorium on both executions and capital punishment sentencing, thereby leading by example in the region despite a complex security environment. The EU has urged the government to uphold its principled position on this issue.

The EU expects Israel to abide by its previous principled position and with its obligations under international law, as well as with its commitment to democratic principles, as also reflected in the provisions of the EU-Israel Association Agreement².

¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>.

² https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/israel/documents/eu_israel/asso_agree_en.pdf.