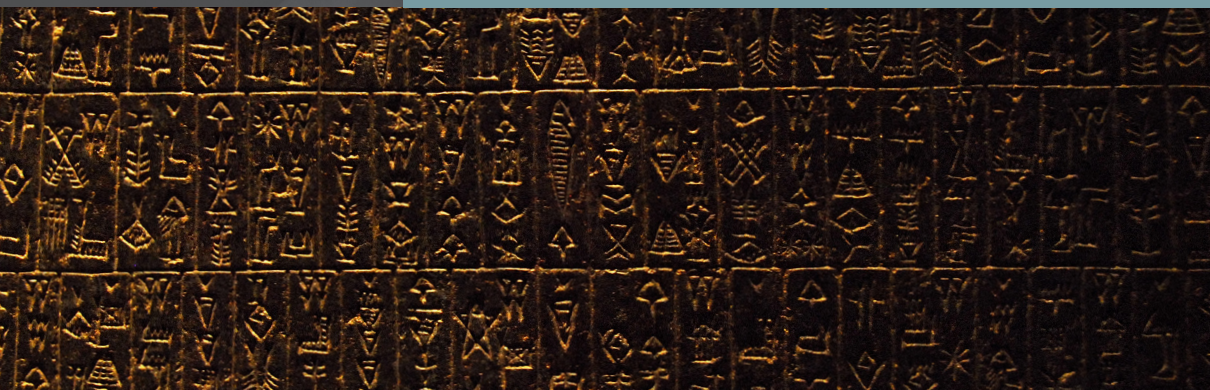


THE ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY IN HISTORY TEACHING



Ad hoc study by the Observatory on
History Teaching in Europe
2026



**OBSERVATORY
ON HISTORY TEACHING
IN EUROPE**



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**Ad hoc study by the Observatory on
History Teaching in Europe
2026**

French edition:

“L’abolition de la peine de mort dans l’enseignement de l’histoire”

ISBN 978-92-871-9709-2

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1 quai Jacoutot, Agora building
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex

E-mail: ohte@coe.int

Cover design and layout: Lushomo

Photos: Wikimedia, Flickr, Mdina Cathedral Museum, Joe P. Borg, National Archives and Records Administration, Salsabila Laliene, Musée du Louvre, European Union, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Council of Europe Publishing
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex
<http://book.coe.int>

ISBN 978-92-871-9689-7

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Printed by Sprint24

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Foreword

Across the 46 member States of the Council of Europe, not one execution has taken place for nearly 30 years. The vast majority of European young people have grown up without the death penalty on the statute books.

The elimination of the death penalty is one of our most striking and significant achievements.

But despite the decline in the number of countries applying the death penalty worldwide, the number of executions in those that do is rising. Here in Europe, there is a resurgence of pro-death penalty narratives.

There can be no complacency in the fight for abolition. And educating young people is key.

At the 2023 Reykjavik Summit, Heads of States and Governments underlined that the Council of Europe “should pursue the fight against the reintroduction of the death penalty, and in favour of its universal abolition, in all places and in all circumstances”.

The Council of Europe has created the position of Coordinator for the Abolition of the Death Penalty and launched projects to counter pro-death penalty narratives, raise awareness of human rights issues, and advocate for global abolition, including setting up a network of young ambassadors against the death penalty.

This study was commissioned to shed light on the teaching of abolition of the death penalty in history curricula and textbooks. It is a crucial step in analysing and consolidating the work of educators to strengthen the abolition movement.

Attitudes to executions have changed before. The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) was adopted in the shadow of the Nuremberg Trials, when the death penalty was in force in most countries. It is hardly surprising that the original text of the Convention provided for the death penalty under some conditions.

But over the years it was recognised that the death penalty is incompatible with democratic values respecting human rights. Protocol No. 6 to the ECHR, adopted by member States in 1983, was the first international legal instrument to prohibit the death penalty in peacetime.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, countries wishing to join the Council of Europe were required first to introduce a moratorium on executions. By the time almost all Central and Eastern European States had acceded to the Council of Europe in 2002, Protocol No. 13, providing for the abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances, was adopted.

You can read about some of the history of abolition in this report. Key moments include the European Court of Human Rights’ landmark decision, *Soering v. the United Kingdom* (1989), mentioned in [Chapter 1](#). In the later *Al-Saadoon and Mufdhi* case (2010), the Court held that the death penalty can be considered contrary to the prohibition of torture and inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The Court continues to hear extradition cases where the question of the death penalty arises.

This study’s findings serve as a call to action to advance abolitionist strategies and deepen awareness of this fundamental human rights issue among young people. No one, anywhere in the world, can afford for such rights to be eroded. Universal abolition must remain our goal. The existence of the death penalty anywhere undermines our own humanity, and with it, the foundations of our democracies.

ALAIN BERSET,

Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Preamble – Towards global abolition

According to the latest five-year report of the United Nations Secretary-General (United Nations Economic and Social Council 2025), a total of 171 countries have either abolished the death penalty in law or ceased its use in practice. Of the 30 countries that continue to employ capital punishment, many use it only occasionally. The vast majority of the executions are confined to a few countries, principally Iran, China, Egypt, Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

For many centuries, there has been a perceptible movement to reduce and eventually eliminate capital punishment. Initially, it took the form of attempts to remove some of the barbarity associated with the practice, including mutilation and torture. The number of crimes for which the death penalty could be applied was reduced gradually in many countries. Philosophers such as Cesare Beccaria and Voltaire expounded on the inhumanity of capital punishment.

The move to full-blown abolition gathered momentum in the post-Second World War period, driven by recognition of the right to life and the prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. Nevertheless, the treaties that it inspired, including the European Convention on Human Rights, accepted capital punishment as a limitation on the right to life, given the fact that most states had not yet moved to abolition.

This began to change in the 1960s and 1970s. As more countries stopped executing offenders and replaced capital punishment with lengthy prison terms in their criminal legislation, international law provided a framework in the form of truly abolitionist treaties.

Throughout this process, scholars have played an important role. They have provided a philosophical and ethical justification for eliminating capital punishment. Criminologists have demonstrated that claims that the death penalty offers a

deterrent effect that is superior to imprisonment are baseless and cannot be sustained by scientific study. International lawyers have contributed to the development of new treaties and to case law of human rights tribunals in this area.

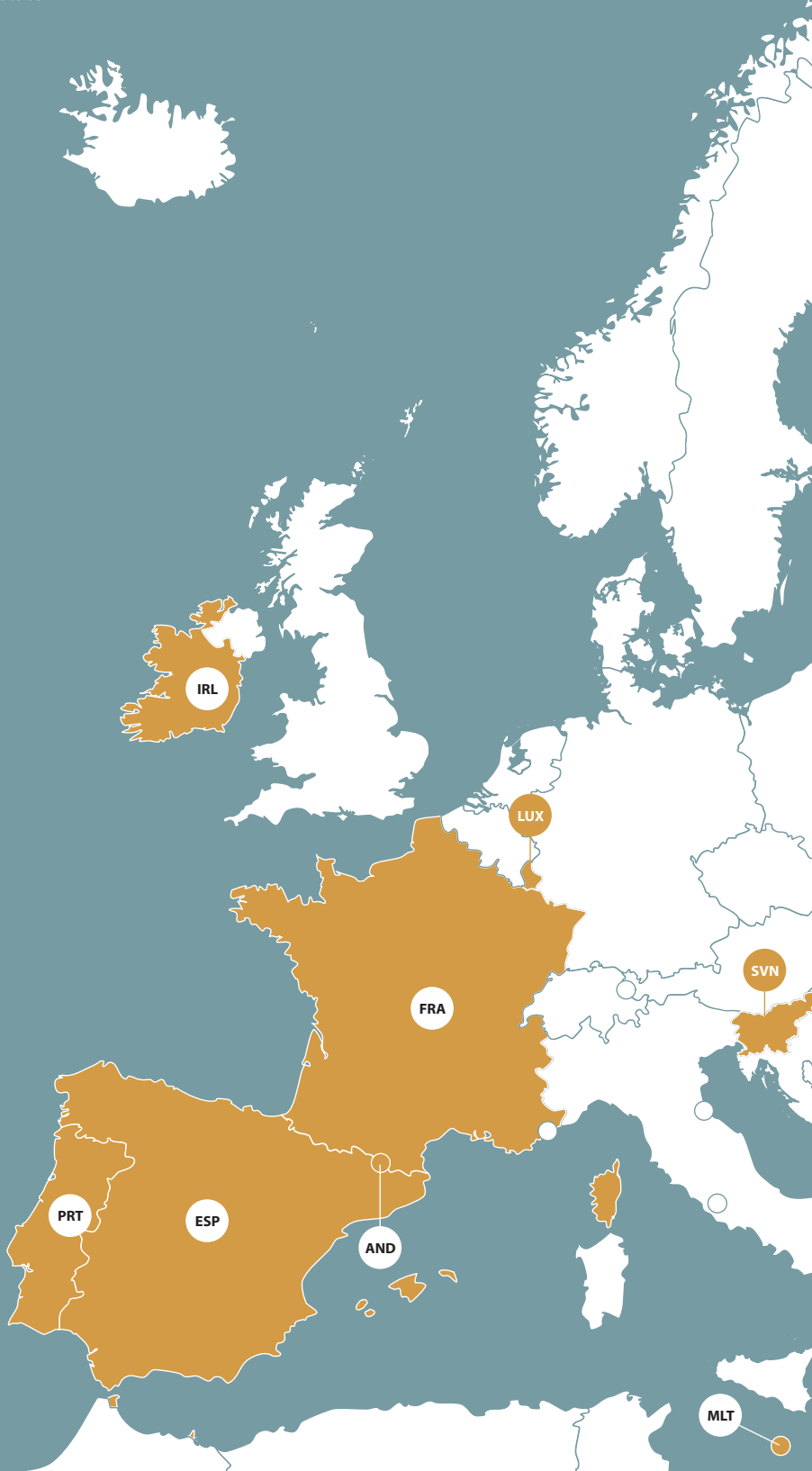
The trend to abolition has been more or less constant for the past few decades. Each year, one or two states abolishes the death penalty in law. For example, in the five-year period studied in the most recent UN report, published in 2025, eight countries became fully abolitionist. This process is not without some “bumps in the road”, of course, and in recent years there has been a measurable increase in the number of known executions, something that is almost entirely attributable to Iran. But overall, the news continues to be positive.

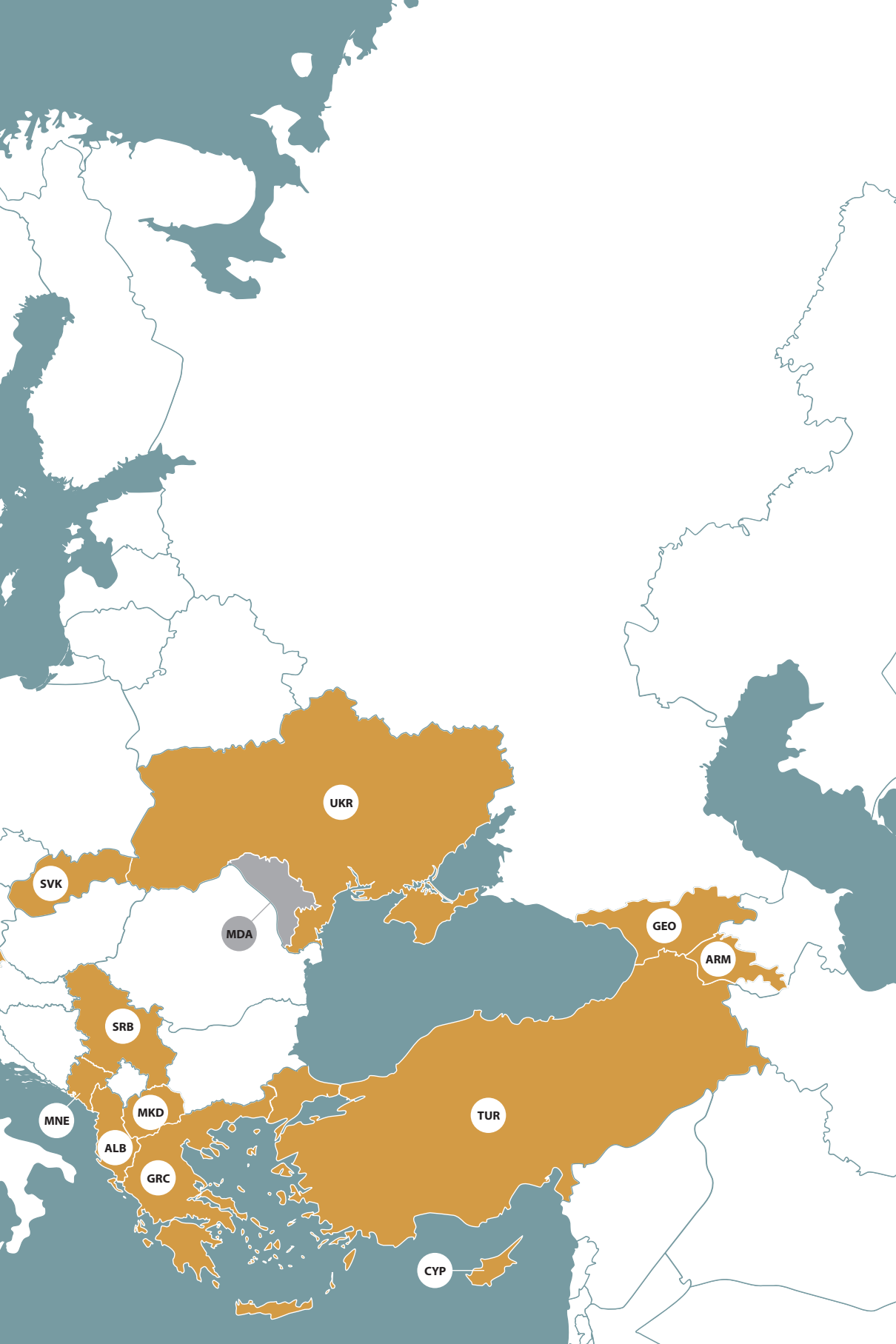
Today, many young people in various parts of the globe, and certainly in Europe, have been born and raised in a world where the death penalty is a relic of history, like the ancient practice of burning at the stake. In this respect, the reality they know is very different from that of their parents and grandparents. An appreciation of the historical development of the death penalty and its abolition is full of valuable lessons, not least being recognition of the progressive developments of human rights and freedoms more generally.

**PROFESSOR LUIS ARROYO ZAPATERO
AND PROFESSOR WILLIAM SCHABAS,**

for the International Academic Network for the
Abolition of Capital Punishment (REPECAP)

- OHTe member states covered by the study
- OHTe observer state





UKR

SVK

MDA

GEO

ARM

SRB

TUR

MNE

MKD

ALB

GRC

CYP



Chapter 1
Introduction



Throughout human history, it has been commonly understood that those who commit crimes must be punished. One particularly controversial punishment has been the death penalty. Also known as capital punishment, it has been referred to as the lawful, state-sanctioned execution of a person as punishment for a criminal offence (Grossman 1998) or as the “punishment of death upon the judicial conviction of an offence” (Chen and Sui 2023). The many different ways in which this punishment could acceptably be carried out, however, have been as much subject to historical change as the societies that pronounce it.

This ad hoc study looks at the portrayal of the death penalty and its abolition in the history curricula and textbooks of the member states of the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe (OHTe).¹ It also invites teachers from OHTe member states to share their experiences of teaching and learning about the death penalty and its abolition in the classroom. The analysis takes into account the fact that legal institutions themselves were and are subject to change, and that the values, norms and practices of law in past eras did not correspond to the legal standards of the present day.

The present study is inspired by the reports produced by the OHTe (2023, 2024, 2025)² and is co-produced by the Leibniz Institute for Educational Media | Georg Eckert Institute (GEI), a long-standing partner of the Council of Europe in the field of history education, and its international network of researchers. While it differs from published OHTe reports in terms of scope, its academic rigour is ensured by a methodology developed under the guidance of the OHTe’s Scientific Advisory Council. The study can be placed in the context of the ongoing international movements for the abolition of the death penalty, particularly the efforts of the Council of Europe towards achieving a death penalty-free zone in Europe.

Background: the death penalty in Europe and arguments for and against its abolition

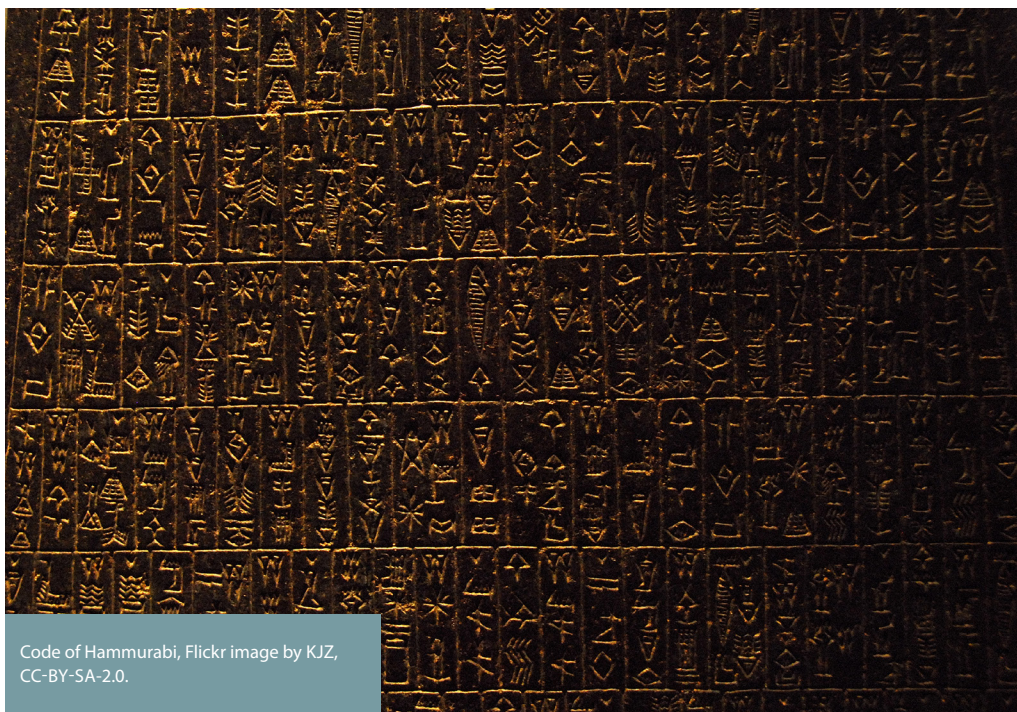
Legally sanctioned executions for infractions of legal codes have existed since the first known codifications, such as those developed in ancient Mesopotamia (3000 BC). The Code of Hammurabi in Babylon (1755-1750 BC) is a famous early example of a legal text illustrating this.

The death penalty has not always been applied in a static or linear way. This is true also of the European context. In the early Middle Ages, for example, the implementation of criminal justice was often not centralised: victims’ families were legally justified in taking compensation into their own hands in the case of a murder or even a perceived insult, sometimes resulting in “blood feuds” (Kovalev 1999). The systematic use of torture or the practice of organised witch hunts and witch purges, leading to executions, became common practice in the late Middle Ages (Krey 2019). What both of these still have in common is that there was little to no organised, large-scale opposition to either practice at the time (Hammel 2010). A notable exception is the rule of the Georgian sovereign (*mep’e*) Tamar from 1184-1213, under whose reign the death penalty was abolished in Georgia (Manchkhshvili 2022).

With the development of modern states in Europe in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, the dynamics of legal frameworks slowly began to shift. States began to govern the use of force, rendering blood feuds illegal (Kovalev 1999). Following the principle of the rule of law, people accused of criminal offences were now increasingly subject to trials, with punishment carried out by the state. There were efforts to design more efficient and supposedly painless execution methods such as the guillotine, first used publicly during the French Revolution (Forst 1999).

¹ Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Cyprus, France, Georgia, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Türkiye and Ukraine.

² On pandemics and natural disasters as reflected in history teaching; on the state of history teaching in Europe; and on economic crises in history teaching.



Code of Hammurabi, Flickr image by KJZ, CC-BY-SA-2.0.

In Europe, substantial criticism of the death penalty first gained a prominent foothold with the Enlightenment's radical change in the understanding of human nature, which was characterised by an increasing conviction in humans' ability to improve (Hammel 2010). In the eyes of thinkers like Voltaire, the state as an institution should not legitimise the killing of people, even if they had committed crimes. During this time, the right of the state to decide on the life or death of its citizens was seriously questioned for the first time (Forst 1999). Writers like Cesare Beccaria in 1764 also highlighted the ineffectiveness of the death penalty in the prevention of crime. These rising concerns about the death penalty provide a blueprint for the two main lines of argumentation against capital punishment that developed in Europe over the following centuries: a utilitarian perspective that implies executions are socially counterproductive and fail to deter crime effectively, and the human rights perspective, which relies on the inherent dignity and inviolability of human life and argues that no state should have the power to take it.

Thus, the question of the death penalty must be approached from both these points of view (Hood and Hoyle 2015).

A core argument for the abolition of the death penalty is that it does not achieve the desired effect of preventing crime. There is no convincing scientific evidence that regions where the death penalty is being used have lower rates of criminality than comparable regions where the death penalty has been abolished. Although intuitively one might assume that the prospect of death would be an effective crime deterrent, this is frequently not the case,³ especially if the offender is acting under extenuating circumstances, such as extreme distress, coercion or impaired judgment, as is often the case in capital crimes. More recently, there has also been a heightened awareness of the risk of executing someone who is innocent as well as of discriminatory sentences (Dudgeon 2013; Šimonović 2015; United Nations Human Rights Committee 2019). The United Nations (UN) notes that members of minority groups are disproportionately likely to face the death penalty (United Nations 2025).

³ For instance, the United Nations Secretary-General notes: "There is no conclusive evidence to support the theory that the death penalty deters crime more effectively than any other punishment" (United Nations 2024).

One prominent argument against the abolition of the death penalty is that it has often been achieved even while public opinion has been in favour of maintaining it. This includes the decision to pass Protocol No. 6, which ignored the prevailing public opinion in Europe at the time (McCormick 2010). However, the concept of public opinion is subject to a number of interpretations, including how data are gathered. Robert Badinter, former French Minister of Justice, has many times pointed out that it takes about 10 to 15 years after the abolition of the death penalty for public opinion to recognise that it has no impact on the crime rate, for example. This is corroborated by academic research: “the experience of nearly all abolitionist countries is that opinions change and support for capital punishment withers as it comes to be seen as a ‘thing of the past’. In other words, abolition can lead to changes in opinion that might not be imagined prior to abolition, by creating a different climate for the discourse on the limits of state punishment” (Hood and Hoyle 2015: 468). Public

opinion can also be greatly influenced by various factors, including the level of knowledge about the death penalty. In this respect, it makes sense to raise awareness on the abolition of the death penalty. On the matter, Amnesty International underlines that “strong public support for the death penalty often goes hand in hand with a lack of reliable information about it – most often the mistaken belief that it will reduce crime ... Crucial factors that underlie how the death penalty is applied are often not understood. These include the risk of executing an innocent person, the unfairness of trials, and the discriminatory nature of the death penalty – all of which contribute to a fully informed view of capital punishment ... [G]overnments need to be open about this information, while promoting respect for human rights through public education programmes.”⁴ Amnesty International highlights the importance of education in order to prevent misinformation, present alternatives to the death penalty and strengthen the understanding of human rights.



Robert Badinter at the first World Congress against the Death Penalty, 2001 © European Union, 1998–2026

Robert Badinter has many times pointed out that it takes about 10 to 15 years after the abolition of the death penalty for public opinion to recognise that it has no impact on the crime rate.

4 See www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/death-penalty/the-death-penalty-your-questions-answered/, accessed 26 February 2026.

The role of the Council of Europe in the abolition movement

With the increasing prominence of the human rights discourse, the death penalty gradually fell out of use in many countries during the 19th century and was even abolished in some (Forst 1999). Notable examples are Venezuela (the first country to abolish the death penalty for all crimes) in 1863 and Portugal in 1867 (Hood 1999), even if the latter reinstated and finally abolished it again in 1976. In some countries, the death penalty was abolished only to be restored later (Hood and Hoyle 2015). Those abolitionist efforts, however, mainly remained a national matter. There were no binding international standards or agreements regarding the abolition of the death penalty.

With the establishment of the Council of Europe in 1949, its role as the intergovernmental “guardian of human rights” in the post-Second World War period became pivotal in shaping European norms. Over time, the Council of Europe, along with other international organisations such as the UN, gradually moved towards the complete and final abolition of the death penalty in Europe and beyond. The 1950 European Convention on Human Rights provided for the death penalty under specific conditions as an exception to the right to life (Article 2). Among many other human rights, the Convention also declared the prohibition of torture and inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment (Article 3). Sentiments in favour of abolition gained momentum in the 1960s. Civil society organisations such as Amnesty International also supported this endeavour with great determination.

In 1983, efforts to eliminate the death penalty culminated in Protocol No. 6 to the Convention. It states: “The death penalty shall be abolished. No-one shall be condemned to such penalty or executed.” The protocol applies only in peacetime and allows exceptions in times of war. The decision followed the recommendations of the 1980 Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which had proposed abolishing the death penalty

for offences committed in peacetime. Protocol No. 13 (added in 2002) abolishes the death penalty in all circumstances. The protocols are binding and Protocol No. 6 has been ratified by all member states of the Council of Europe and Protocol No. 13 by all except one.⁵ The international and binding nature of the Convention has proven to be very effective in preventing the restoration of the death penalty in member states of the Council of Europe. The abolition of the death penalty has been a precondition for accession to the Council of Europe since the 1990s, and no executions have been carried out in any of the 46 member states since 1997.

The Council of Europe maintains that the death penalty violates human rights, namely the right to life and human dignity, and the right not to be subject to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. This position is shared by the European Union (European External Action Service 2025); furthermore, the UN asserts that “the use of the death penalty is not consistent with the right to life and the right to live free from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment” (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights n.d.). The “death row phenomenon” or “syndrome”, which has received recognition in international jurisprudence and in international tribunals over recent decades, describes the psychological harm inflicted on individuals faced with the threat of execution (The Death Penalty Project 2025). Indeed, in its 1989 landmark judgment in the case of *Soering v. the United Kingdom*, the European Court of Human Rights (the Court) found that the potential exposure to this phenomenon, where people spend several years in extreme stress and psychological trauma awaiting execution, contravenes Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The Court has developed consistent case law since then.

For the Council of Europe, the movement to abolish the death penalty, and thus to protect human rights, does not end at the borders of Europe. It is the Organisation’s proclaimed goal to work towards the global abolition of the death penalty.

⁵ Azerbaijan signed Protocol No. 13 on 8 March 2023. The text now requires ratification to become legally binding for Azerbaijan.

Learning about the abolition of the death penalty through history education

Most pupils in Europe have grown up in countries where the death penalty has already been abolished. Gaining a deeper understanding of the process that led to its abolition can help young people grasp why the death penalty does not align with democratic values. Students can thus learn about the history of the death penalty, the movements to abolish it and the reactions of contemporary spectators of executions, as well as the legal and philosophical arguments developed by defenders and critics of the death penalty alike. Teaching and learning about the abolition of the death penalty can go beyond simply knowing about the organisations that fought and continue to fight the death penalty. Students can learn about the underlying values and key legal documents, attitudes and judicial decisions of the institutions involved, such as the Council of Europe, its Parliamentary Assembly and the European Court of Human Rights. They can also be familiarised with the history of criminal regulation in order to understand the evolution of the discussion on capital punishment, where it is going and how we arrived at the current point. History teaching is particularly suitable to show how legal institutions can be shaped over the course of time to defend the right to life and human dignity.⁶

Pupils can learn that in the European context, human rights, democracy and the rule of law are not static concepts, and achievements are not irreversible, but require continuous commitment



Engraving illustrating the beheading of Louis XVI. Wikimedia, public domain.

from academia, politics and civil society. Teaching about the death penalty and its abolition places particular demands on history education, as it must combine cognitive and affective elements. It can introduce pupils to the development of ideas about human dignity and the right to life, the movements to achieve these rights, and their guarantee at the national and international level.

Teaching and learning about the debate surrounding the abolition of the death penalty, the process behind it and its application in judicial practice can contribute to the implementation of the principles and guidelines of quality history education in the 21st century (Council of Europe 2018a) and the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (Council of Europe 2018b). In particular, it can help students to develop knowledge and critical understanding of the development of criminal law and human rights, an appreciation of human dignity, justice and equality as well as tolerance of ambiguity, empathy and critical thinking. The theme is particularly suited to helping teachers and students address sensitive and controversial issues and to balance cognitive, emotive and ethical dimensions in history teaching and learning.

The treatment of the criticism of and the movement for the abolition of the death penalty lend themselves to a multiperspective approach and can promote the development of critical thinking skills. The topic is also implied in the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, in that pupils are expected to defend “the view that when people are imprisoned, although they are subject to restrictions, this does not mean that they are less deserving of respect and dignity than anyone else” and “the view that no one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment” (Council of Europe 2018b: 15).

The themes addressed in this study align with the values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law espoused by the Council of Europe, which has itself played a central role in the abolition of the death penalty in Europe and continues to

⁶ See Resolution 2584 (2025) “Multiperspectivity in remembrance and history education for democratic citizenship”, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

address the issue as part of its political agenda. An unprecedented examination of the teaching of the history of the abolition of the death penalty in Europe has the potential to further raise awareness among young people about the dangers of a society that makes use of this punishment, and to contribute to the debate on strengthening abolition policies and the defence of human rights more broadly.

Key findings

1. The curricula of all OHTE member states provide a wide range of topics where the treatment of the death penalty and the movements for its abolition can be included. The curricula of France, Ireland and Malta explicitly mention the topic of the death penalty and historical cases of execution.
2. Textbooks in all OHTE member states include topics that either directly reference the death penalty or provide opportunities for addressing the issue. The most frequently included examples are the Code of Hammurabi, the trial and execution of Louis XVI and the show trials under Stalinist rule.
3. Textbooks often present the death penalty in its political dimension. Many textbooks point

out that this punishment was often used by political powers as a means of repressing political opponents.

4. Many textbooks highlight that the death penalty was often used discriminatorily with regard to class, gender, religion or belonging to indigenous communities.
5. While the textbooks largely present examples of the application of the death penalty, the development of the arguments for its abolition is rarely discussed. When textbooks do present movements for the abolition of the death penalty, they frame these in a broader societal context of fighting authoritarian rule and the promotion of the democratisation of society.
6. The majority of the teachers who gave feedback on their experiences with the topic teach the death penalty on their own initiative. They indicated that they would appreciate additional material, especially regarding the abolition of the death penalty from a global perspective. They also noted that the topic has the potential to contribute to an interdisciplinary human rights education by linking history with philosophy, civics, and moral or religious education.



Chapter 2
Methodology

This ad hoc study combines curriculum and textbook analyses carried out by country experts in OHTE member states and is complemented by teachers' feedback. The methodology aims to capture a snapshot of the regulative dimension (curricula), its manifestation in widely used educational material (textbooks) and its implementation in actual learning environments (as reported by teachers). The search in the curricula and textbooks was based on the keywords "death", "penalty", "trial", "sentence", "capital", "punishment", and "execution". The keywords were translated into the respective national languages by the country experts for the search. The keywords were taken up again in the semi-open questionnaire for the teachers' feedback. The results of the analyses of the country experts were redirected to the team at the GEI, where they were systematised and synthesised.

All three elements follow an overarching logic in order to ensure that the findings match and complement each other. The specific methodological details for each component will be described in the following sections. In order to fit the scope of this study while still enabling in-depth discussion of the topic, the analyses are limited to ISCED-2 and ISCED-3.⁷

Curriculum analysis

The history curricula analysed for the study were selected on the basis of the submissions of the member states' governments for the school year 2024-2025 and reviewed by experts on history education from each country (see [Appendix 1](#)).

A key angle of the analysis is how the death penalty is presented in curricula in the context of the historical development of philosophical values and legal institutions as well as ideas of

(criminal) law from ancient to recent history. In this framework, experts were asked to search for the keywords mentioned above, as well as other synonyms and related terms in the relevant language(s) for their country. In cases where the topic of the death penalty and its abolition are not explicitly mentioned in curricula, experts analysed elements within the curricula that could potentially provide a context for addressing the topic (for example violent changes in political regimes).

Textbook analysis

The textbook sample contains a selection of textbooks from 18 of the 19 OHTE member states (see [Appendix 2](#)). Unlike the curriculum analysis and the teacher feedback, Andorra is not studied in the textbook analysis. The Andorran education ministry does not produce textbooks for Andorran public schools and there are no private publishers producing textbooks for the Andorran education system.

One textbook per year/grade and country was selected for analysis based on the following criteria.

- ▶ In countries in which the ministry of education issues an official textbook list, the book that appears most frequently on the textbook list was selected. This was the case in Albania, Armenia, Cyprus, Georgia, Greece, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal, Türkiye and Ukraine.
- ▶ If there was no such list, one book per year/grade was selected from the market-leading publishing houses. This was the case in France, Ireland,⁸ Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain.
- ▶ Due to the bilingual school system in Luxembourg, one French and one German-language textbook were analysed.⁹

⁷ International Standard Classification of Education.

⁸ In Ireland, individual schools decide which resources to use. There are no requirements placed on them by the Department of Education in this regard. However, the Department of Education provides advice and support through its teacher support services and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. It also issues guidelines for teachers and provides support materials to help and guide their work with students.

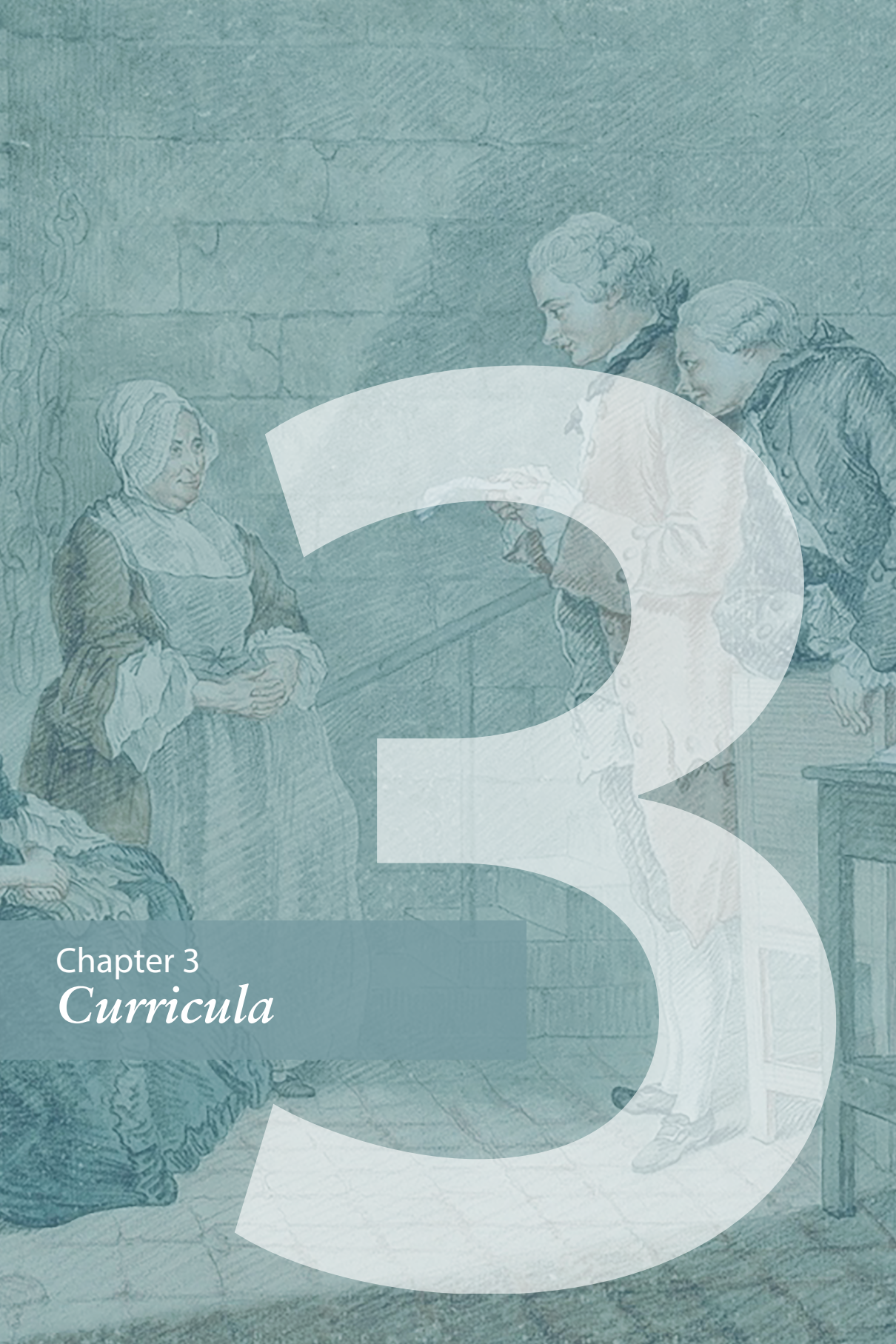
⁹ Textbooks published by the French publishing house Hatier are used in both France and Luxembourg.

- ▶ As there are no textbooks, in the narrower sense of the definition, in Malta, the study analysed the teaching materials issued by the ministry of education.
- ▶ Since the main textbooks used in Cyprus are the same as those used in Greece, a textbook series focusing on Cypriot history was analysed as well.

The textbook analysis covers the historical time periods in which the death penalty appears as a topic; perspectives on the death penalty from legal history; the political purposes and instrumentalisation of the death penalty; people subjected to the death penalty with a focus on class, gender and religious groups; and criticism and abolition of the death penalty. In addition to author-written, text-based content, the analysis looked at the inclusion of visual material and primary sources, examining whether they are used for illustrative purposes or also provide springboards for dealing with larger historical and ethical questions on the topic of the death penalty. Guiding questions for the textbook analysis were developed by the team at the GEI and provided to the country experts who carried out the analyses.

Teachers' feedback

To gain insight into the experiences and viewpoints of history teachers on the discussion of the death penalty and its abolition in the classroom, experts from Armenia, Cyprus, Greece, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Türkiye and Ukraine collected feedback from 95 ISCED-2 and ISCED-3 history teachers in their countries (see [Appendix 3](#)), using a semi-structured questionnaire that aligned with thematic elements defined for the curriculum and textbook analyses. For example, teachers were asked whose suggestions or guidelines (curricula, textbooks) they follow in teaching about the death penalty and its abolition; about the interest or engagement of students in the subject; about their experiences of teaching about the death penalty as a sensitive topic; and about their ideas on teaching the abolition of the death penalty in a broader interdisciplinary framework of human rights education. The questionnaire was translated into the respective national languages and the results were communicated in English.



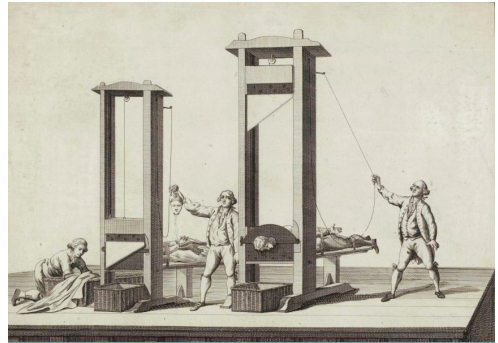
Chapter 3
Curricula

The curricula for history education in most OHTE member states do not explicitly mention the death penalty or the national and international movements for its abolition. There are three exceptions.

- ▶ In France, the curricula prescribe treatment of the trial and execution of Louis XVI for the final grade of lower secondary¹⁰ and the second grade of upper secondary education.¹¹ In the final year of upper secondary education, pupils learn about the abolition of the death penalty in France in 1981.¹²
- ▶ In Ireland, the Stalinist show trials are prescribed as a case study for the death penalty as a means of political repression during the communist regime.¹³
- ▶ In the Maltese history curriculum, the death penalty is mentioned in several instances: as a punishment for piracy,¹⁴ the execution of the Aztec emperor Moctezuma,¹⁵ the public execution of rebels during the 1749 “Conspiracy of the Slaves”,¹⁶ and the execution of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette during the French Revolution.¹⁷

Even if the death penalty is not officially mentioned, the curricula of all OHTE member states do provide, at least implicitly, a wide range of suggestions and space for the treatment of the death penalty and the movements for its abolition from ancient to contemporary history.

For ancient history, opportunities and space for addressing the death penalty are provided by topics such as the role of law in early state-building processes in Mesopotamia, the political constitution of the Roman Republic or the persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire. The



Estampe d'une double guillotine (Print of a double guillotine)
– Musée de la Révolution française. Wikimedia, author: Milky (CC BY-SA 4.0).

Code of Hammurabi (1755-1750 BC) or the Laws of the Twelve Tables (circa 450 BC) are also topics that are frequently prescribed in most OHTE member states and can be used to ignite discussion of the death penalty.

For the Middle Ages and the early modern period, the treatment of heresy and witch hunts in periods of crisis and reform within the Christian Church provide openings to discuss the death penalty. Here, case studies on Jan Hus, Joan of Arc or Giordano Bruno offer opportunities for a biographical approach to the treatment of the death penalty and its criticism.

Teaching about the Enlightenment then offers the opportunity to make pupils familiar with the rising criticism of the death penalty, which led to movements for its abolition, as well as the increasing number of voices in favour of abolition heard in parliamentary debates during the European revolutions of 1848-1849.

The topic of the French Revolution of 1789 provides another chance to address capital punishment. It can open up discussions of Voltaire's criticism

¹⁰ FRA/Programme pour les Cycles 2, 3, 4, p. 106.

¹¹ FRA/Programme d'histoire-géographie de première générale, p. 6.

¹² FRA/Programme d'histoire-géographie de terminale générale, p. 8.

¹³ IRL/Leaving Certificate. History Syllabus, p. 44.

¹⁴ MLT/History (General) Syllabus for Year 9 as part of Environmental Studies, p. 4.

¹⁵ MLT/History (Option) School Syllabus for Year 9, p. 18.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 38.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 22.



La Malheureuse famille Calas (The Unfortunate Calas Family), by Louis Carrogis Carmontelle (1717-1806). RF 41215, Recto © Musée du Louvre, dist. GrandPalaisRmn/Martine Beck-Coppola.

of the death penalty, illustrated by the execution and subsequent exoneration of Jean Calas; the trial and execution of Louis XVI; or of female revolutionaries like Jeanne-Marie Roland de la Platière, also known as Manon Roland, or Olympe de Gouges.


In the context of modern history, teaching about the rise of totalitarian regimes in the 20th century opens up a wide range of possibilities for dealing with the topic of arbitrary death sentences and executions, particularly in the criminal justice systems of fascist and communist regimes. The majority of curricula also offer space for the treatment of the death penalty in the context of

the construction of the international order after the Second World War, for example through the Nuremberg and Tokyo war crimes trials.

In the case of historical content being included in an interdisciplinary social sciences course, the Spanish curriculum prescribes the study of the Spanish Constitution, including Article 15 stipulating the abolition of the death penalty. The social sciences and humanities curriculum of Andorra addresses the abolition of the death penalty in the constitution of 1993. These examples highlight the possibility of using the abolition of the death penalty as a topic to address human rights in a cross-curricular methodological context.



Chapter 4
Textbooks



In contrast to the curricula for history education, the selected textbooks from the OHTE member states all provide numerous examples for the treatment of the death penalty in history lessons. All the textbooks provide examples from European history, many from their respective national histories, and some take on a global perspective. Furthermore, the death penalty is described in all periods, from ancient history through to contemporary history.

Chronological presentations of the death penalty

The first reference to the death penalty usually occurs when discussing ancient Mesopotamian civilisations, most notably in the context of the Code of Hammurabi. This early legal text is studied in the textbooks of Albania, Cyprus, France, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain and Ukraine. Specific clauses that include references to capital punishment are frequently singled out. This is often followed by material on the Laws of the Twelve Tables, which prescribed death for various offences, including treason, certain types of libel and slander, bribing a judge, stealing at night or with a weapon, but forbade killing a person without their conviction. Textbooks in Cyprus, Greece, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovakia also provide information on ancient Greek Draconian law.

For ancient history, Albanian, Slovak and Slovenian textbooks use the example of the persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire in their depiction of the death penalty. They reference the crucifixion of Christ and the Roman emperors' treatment of Christians within the broader context of the expansion of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire.

For the Middle Ages, textbooks from Georgia and Luxembourg illustrate a shift in the application of the death penalty by presenting Charlemagne's laws, which used the death penalty against people who refused to convert to Christianity during his war against the Saxons between AD 772-804.

In textbooks from Cyprus, France, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Portugal, Serbia and Ukraine, the same process is covered by teaching about the Inquisition.

When teaching about the early modern period onwards, a common topic in almost all OHTE member states is the so-called witch hunts, which serve as an example highlighting the arbitrariness of the application of the death penalty. This is then usually followed up by teaching about the values of the Enlightenment and subsequently the French Revolution – especially the introduction of the guillotine and the execution of Louis XVI. Furthermore, textbooks from Cyprus, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Malta, North Macedonia, Portugal, Serbia, Spain, Türkiye and Ukraine offer opportunities for discussing the death penalty in the context of imperialism, with some also mentioning its arbitrary application by European colonial powers against indigenous people.

For modern history, prominent historical trials offer numerous opportunities for discussing the death penalty. In the context of the Greco-Turkish War (1920-1923), the death penalty is mentioned as part of the "Trial of the Six".¹⁸ The Stalinist show trials of the 1930s are among the most frequently included examples across member states. They are discussed in the textbooks of Albania, Armenia, France, Georgia, Ireland, Luxembourg, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Türkiye and Ukraine. Textbooks from these countries, as well as Greek textbooks used in Cyprus, also include the Nuremberg Trials (1945-1946), where leading Nazi politicians and officers were tried for crimes against peace and humanity and war crimes. From more recent times, the trial and execution of Nicolae Ceaușescu in 1989 is a frequently cited example. Imperialist contexts in national and international perspective are included in Cypriot and Ukrainian textbooks, in which executions under British rule in Cyprus and during the anti-imperialist Boxer Rebellion in China, respectively, are mentioned. In addition, the history textbooks of France, Ireland, Luxembourg,

¹⁸ Veljanovski N. et al. (2009), p. 64.



Heksenverbranding in Derenburg (Saksen-Anhalt, Duitsland) in 1555. Wikimedia, public domain.

Malta and Spain embed the abolition of the death penalty in the political movements for democracy in the 19th and 20th centuries, which were linked to the drafting of democratic constitutions.

The Irish textbook for the Junior Cycle (lower secondary level) is unique in embedding the death penalty in the general history of crime and punishment, covering it continuously from ancient times to the modern period in the elective module “Patterns of change: crime and punishment”. Information on the topic appears throughout the textbook and is summarised at the end. The textbook examines how definitions of crime and punishment evolved over time, including the development of the death penalty in this context. The authors ask the students in a sample exam question to “explain changes ... that took place in relation to the theme (crime and punishment) you studied.”¹⁹

Perspectives from legal history

Textbooks from many OHE members use examples of the death penalty to illustrate the historical development of criminal law from

ancient history to the present day. Examples from ancient legal history include the codification of the death penalty in the Code of Hammurabi during the Old Babylonian Empire (Albania, Cyprus, France, Greece, Ireland, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Türkiye, Ukraine) and the Roman Laws of the Twelve Tables (Albania, Ireland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain). For instance, an Irish textbook provides an example of the Laws of the Twelve Tables: “If a man commits theft by night and is killed, let the killing be lawful”; moreover, it includes a question for students: “Under what conditions was the sentence of death given?”²⁰

Textbooks sometimes prompt students to analyse evolving concepts of law, justice and legal systems.

- In Malta, pupils are asked to write a comparative analysis of different judicial systems, in this case the secular courts, the Spanish Inquisition and the Roman Inquisition, as they applied to Malta. They are required to analyse divergent approaches to justice administration, contextualise punitive measures within their institutional frameworks

¹⁹ Browne J. and O’Connor C. (2023a), p. 405.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 30-31.

and evaluate evolving conceptions of human dignity in early modern Europe.²¹

► Luxembourgish textbooks propose a similar task. German-language textbooks in Luxembourg describe the movement for the abolition of the death penalty using the example of the debate on the “fundamental rights of the German people” during the revolution of 1848-1849. One textbook quotes paragraph 139 of the Reich Constitution of 1849, which states: “The death penalty, as well as the penalties of pillory, branding and corporal punishment, are abolished.” Students are assigned two tasks: first, to identify which social groups would have benefited from the newly codified rights; and second, to compare those rights with the rights enshrined in the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany passed in 1949. This comparative exercise encourages students to trace the evolution of constitutional principles and to reflect on continuity and change in German legal and political culture.²²

► The Irish textbook for the Junior Cycle presents the links between the historical development of the understanding of crime and punishment and present-day challenges in a systematic way by asking students to identify “patterns of change” in the history of criminal justice. The death penalty, although not the main focus, is always part of this approach.

In terms of legally prescribed methods of execution, the textbooks depict different types of execution and tools through text and images, such as crucifixion, beheading, the breaking wheel, hanging, drowning, burning, shooting, guillotining or the electric chair. Irish textbooks show how execution instruments such as the guillotine, which were invented with the aim of reducing the agony of those condemned to death, led to an increase in the “efficiency” of killing.²³ In Slovak textbooks, the invention of the electric chair is presented as an example of the danger of alternating currents to

humans: “The invention of the electric chair, used to carry out the death penalty using alternating current, arose from the competition between Tesla and Edison.”²⁴

Representations of the political purposes and instrumentalisation of the death penalty

In many cases, textbooks invite pupils to reflect on the practice and evaluate the political aims and instrumentalisation of the death penalty in history. Such discussions may go as far back as the Middle Ages: for instance, in the Irish Junior Cycle textbook, pupils are encouraged to reflect on why “the authorities wanted to have a huge crowd present” for executions.²⁵ This indicates that pupils not only learn facts about different kinds of punishment, but are also invited to think about the role of these punishments as a means of amassing public support and securing political power.

The application of the death penalty in removing monarchs from power in the context of political upheaval is discussed in several instances.

► Georgian history textbooks invite pupils to discuss the arguments for and against the execution of Charles I in England in 1649. Students are asked to “[t]hink of arguments for or against the court’s decision. What forces did the opposing sides rely on in the struggle for power, and by using what resources did Parliament manage to defeat the king?”²⁶ The execution is presented here as a means of securing political power.

► The trial and execution of Louis XVI in 1793 in the context of the French Revolution plays a central role in the history textbooks of all OHTE member states. French textbooks use the trial of Louis XVI in 1792 for an in-depth examination of the issue. They present both the trial, with those acting for the prosecution and the defence, as well as the controversial positions of the members of

²¹ History Department (2020c), pp. 8-9.

²² Sauer M. (2022), p. 320.

²³ Browne J. and O’Connor C. (2023a), p. 162.

²⁴ Bednárová M., Krasnovský B. and Ulrichová B. (2011), p. 32.

²⁵ Browne J. and O’Connor C. (2023a), p. 63.

²⁶ Akhmeteli N., Lortkifanidze B. and Firtskhalava N. (2020), p. 37.

the French parliament on the question of the conviction of the French king. Students examine the event in the context of modern media: "A television channel is preparing a programme on the great trials in history, including that of Louis XVI. You are an intern and have been asked to give a presentation on the trial in front of the channel's journalists."²⁷

In describing political transitions and disruptions, the executions of revolutionaries, activists, and dissenters are also prominently included in textbooks.

- ▶ Spanish textbooks cover these conflicts by using the example of the execution of the leaders of the Comuneros uprising against the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V in 1521.²⁸
- ▶ The history textbooks of Slovakia use the example of the death sentence and execution of the physician and rector of Prague University, Ján Jenesius, by the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II in 1621. They also describe the death penalty as part of the repression of anti-fascist resistance in the Slovak National Uprising of 1944.²⁹
- ▶ Portuguese textbooks use the example of the trials and execution of the Távora family, belonging to the high nobility, who were accused of having organised an assassination attempt on the Portuguese King Joseph I in September 1758.³⁰
- ▶ Maltese history textbooks provide a teaching unit on the "Conspiracy of the Slaves" of 1749. Students are encouraged to discuss the unequal treatment of the conspirators regarding their punishment. The textbooks illustrate this disparity by noting: "The leaders of the plot

were discovered, but since Mustafa Pasha was protected by the King of France, he was only arrested. Thirty-eight leaders of the plot were tortured, tried, and executed."³¹

- ▶ In Serbia, an explicit mention of the death penalty as a consequence of a judicial process relates to the Timok Rebellion – an internal Serbian political uprising in 1883, led by members of the Radical Party against King Milan Obrenović. Another mention of a judicial process resulting in the death penalty is the Thessaloniki Trial (1917), in which Serbian Colonel Dragutin Dimitrijević Apis was accused of organising a conspiracy against Regent Aleksandar Karađorđević and was sentenced to death.³²
- ▶ Macedonian textbooks reference the execution in 1915 of the revolutionary Yane Sandanski, who supported the idea of an independent Macedonian state.³³
- ▶ In Greece, the death penalty is also brought up in the context of the post-civil war period (after 1949). One textbook states that "in 1952, a new Constitution was approved, but without abolishing many of the 'emergency measures' of the Civil War period. That same year, leader of the Greek Communist Party Nikos Beloyannis and his associates were executed."³⁴ Another textbook states that "the political system of post-civil war Greece was a constitutional monarchy. However, citizens who were suspected of left-wing sympathies were sent to prisons and exile camps. Some were executed. The state required the signing of declarations of loyalty."³⁵
- ▶ In Cyprus, students learn about the Greek Cypriot student and EOKA³⁶ fighter Evagoras Pallikarides. Information about his death sentence is

²⁷ Amichaud J. et al. (2019a), p. 28.

²⁸ Burgos M. and Muñoz-Delgado M. C. (2023b), p. 181.

²⁹ Kamenec I., Kováč D. and Kratochvíl V. (2019), pp. 80-81.

³⁰ Maia C. et al. (2022), p. 94.

³¹ History Department (2020b), p. 5.

³² Popović R. and Miranović D. (2019), p. 142.

³³ Bošković M. et al. (2006), p. 18.

³⁴ Koliopoulos I. et al. (n.d.), p. 157.

³⁵ Louvi E. and Xifaras D. (n.d.), p. 152.

³⁶ *Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston*, or the National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters, a Greek Cypriot guerrilla organisation that fought against British colonial rule in Cyprus between 1955 and 1959.



Antoine Favray (1706-1798): a 1749 signed depiction of Muslim slaves meeting at the Valletta bagnio (slave prison). Courtesy: Mdina Cathedral Museum, Malta, Photo: Joe P. Borg

juxtaposed with a photograph of Pallikarides and a “poem about freedom”³⁷ that he wrote.

Among the most frequently cited examples of the application of the death penalty as a means of political repression are those that relate to the history of communist regimes. In their accounts of 20th-century history, the textbooks of Albania, Armenia, Cyprus, France, Georgia, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Ukraine mention the political criminal justice systems of communist regimes. Several examples are provided below.

- ▶ The Irish Junior Cycle history textbook describes in detail the political criminal justice system in the Soviet Union under Stalin’s rule during the 20th century. Using the example of Stalinist show trials, they illustrate the perversion of formal legal procedures and the extortion of (false) confessions through torture, which

led to numerous politically motivated death sentences being handed down between 1936 and 1938.³⁸

- ▶ The history textbooks from Georgia use the example of the death penalty to show how formal legal institutions were misused to impose arbitrary death sentences: “The repression of the 1930s was characterised by a peculiarity; the government attempted to ensure that each death sentence case ... was conducted in a manner that appeared lawful. Indeed, in every criminal case, a substantial number of fabricated materials are presented.”³⁹
- ▶ One Ukrainian textbook explores the death penalty as part of the repressive policy of the Stalinist regime: “The people yearned for a better and freer life. Freethinking and nationalist sentiments were becoming more widespread, expressed primarily by the intelligentsia. Stalin’s

³⁷ Pantelidou A., Protopapa K. and Yiallourides S. (1994), p. 113.

³⁸ Browne J. and O’Connor C. (2023a), p. 243.

³⁹ Abdaladze G. et al. (2012), p. 182.

repressions were directed against them.”⁴⁰ The death penalty as an instrument of mass political repression is presented as an integral part of state terror during the Stalinist period.

- ▶ In Armenian textbooks, this example is one of the few instances where the death penalty is mentioned: “The wave of mass arrests and violence reached its peak in 1937. The Armenian authorities were ordered by Moscow to continue the ‘effective’ search for ‘enemies of the people’. Hundreds of state, party, and cultural figures, workers, servants, peasants, and soldiers were arrested. Yeghishe Charents, Aksel Bakunts, Gurgen Mahari, and others were accused of left-wing leanings and other ‘crimes’. Charents died in prison, Bakunts was executed, and Mahari was exiled from Armenia.”⁴¹
- ▶ The discussion of the death penalty in relation to communist regimes also extends to the post-Second World War period, for example, in Albanian and Slovak history textbooks. Albanian textbooks encourage pupils to create an album featuring images of those labelled “enemies of

the people” and subjected to the death penalty by the communist regime. They are invited to discuss the relationship between the dictatorship of the proletariat and its citizens, as well as the extent to which human rights were respected.⁴² The Irish Junior Cycle textbook uses the example of Imre Nagy, the Hungarian political leader of the anti-Soviet uprising of 1956, taking a biographical approach to present the arbitrary trials and executions of opposition leaders in the Soviet bloc after 1945.

Finally, executions are also discussed as tools instrumentalised for the consolidation of power in colonial and imperialist projects. Such instances may offer opportunities for a discussion of the blurred boundaries between functional legal systems and extrajudicial applications of violence in these historical contexts, as well as the role (or absence) of the state in applying the death penalty.

- ▶ Textbooks from Cyprus, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Malta, North Macedonia, Portugal, Serbia, Spain, Türkiye and Ukraine address the death penalty in the context of the Spanish

⁴⁰ Gisem O. V. and Martyniuk O. O. (2019a), p. 35.

⁴¹ Melkonyan A. et al. (2023d), p. 100.

⁴² Dërguti M. et al. (2018a), p. 162.



The execution of the Inca. Spaniards burning Atahualpa, Inca ruler, at stake, with monk holding crucifix to right of Inca. Wikimedia, public domain.

conquest of the Americas. In North Macedonia, pupils are introduced to the concepts of colonialism and colonial slavery, emphasising that the Spanish conquerors treated the indigenous people of the Americas mercilessly and that disobedience was punished.⁴³ It is implied that this could encompass executions. French, Luxembourgish, Maltese, Portuguese and Spanish textbooks treat the execution of the Inca Atahualpa as a case study for the violence and arbitrariness of the Spanish conquerors: “Francisco Pizarro arrived in Peru in 1531. The following year, he took the Inca ruler Atahualpa prisoner and executed him.”⁴⁴

- ▶ Ukrainian textbooks direct their attention towards imperialist attempts to strengthen Western nations’ influence on China. Pupils are familiarised with the suppression of anti-Western uprisings through the example of the Boxer Rebellion in 1899-1901. They learn that “after suppressing the rebellion, China was forced to sign new unequal treaties. It had to pay a large indemnity, foreign troops were introduced into the embassy quarter in Beijing, and the death penalty was imposed for the murder of a European, Japanese or American.”⁴⁵
- ▶ In Cypriot textbooks, the death penalty appears primarily in the context of political repression and foreign occupation, specifically in the discussion of the execution of EOKA members by British authorities. The Gymnasium textbook (Year 9) states: “On 10 May 1956, Michalakis Karaolis and Andreas Dimitriou were hanged in the Central Prisons of Nicosia.”⁴⁶ Primary sources are also used, albeit to reinforce the emotional effect rather than to invite debate on capital punishment. The death penalty in the colonial context is also narrativised as national sacrifice; for instance, in the Lyceum (Year 12) textbook: “the hanging of Evagoras

Pallikarides on 14 March 1957 was a supreme moment of sacrifice.”⁴⁷

People subjected to the death penalty

In terms of depicting the diverse individuals and groups who were subjected to the death penalty in history, the dimensions of class, gender and religion are three particularly prominent perspectives present throughout the analysed textbooks.

Class

Georgian, Irish, Montenegrin, Macedonian and Slovenian textbooks emphasise the role of class in the application of the death penalty in slaveholder societies. One Slovenian textbook references Roman legal codes: “If a free man is caught stealing, he is flogged; if a slave, he is killed.”⁴⁸ Similarly, an Irish textbook states that “a slave having no rights was subject to any type of punishment” whereas for a Roman, “a sentence of death was given only if [they were] found guilty of treason, murder or patricide.”⁴⁹ Pupils are thereby encouraged to draw on historical examples to reflect on the unequal treatment of people before the law.

The guillotine is often afforded a special status as a “weapon of social equality”.⁵⁰ As a Georgian textbook states, it served as a tool “against rank injustice and inequality, as only those of the highest social class were punished by beheading, which was considered a quick and painless death. Therefore, it would serve to establish equality among citizens [...] even in the matter of the death penalty. In addition, the guillotine was believed to be faster and more humane than other methods of execution.”⁵¹ Such assertions may open up opportunities for discussions about changing attitudes towards the death penalty over time.

⁴³ Boškosi M. et al. (2006), p. 15.
⁴⁴ Burgos M. and Muñoz-Delgado M. C. (2023b), p. 183.
⁴⁵ Gisem O. V. and Martyniuk O. O. (2017), p. 199.
⁴⁶ Pantelidou A., Protopapa K. and Yiallourides S. (1994), p. 178.
⁴⁷ Pantelidou A. et al. (2002), p. 212.
⁴⁸ Razpotnik J. and Plazar A. (2022), p. 80.
⁴⁹ Browne J. and O’Connor C. (2023a), p. 403.
⁵⁰ Ugulava G. et al. (2023), p. 485.
⁵¹ Ibid.

Women

Serbian textbook authors include the trials and executions of women in ancient history by asking their students to analyse several clauses from the Code of Hammurabi. Among them is Clause 143, which addresses the case of an unfaithful wife: “if she is not devoted to her home and husband, she should be thrown into the river”. They problematise the absence of gender equality and identify the type of punishment (i.e. death penalty) imposed on women for infidelity.⁵² For the early modern period, textbooks use the example of heresy or witch hunts, without necessarily foregrounding the voices of women as victims. The execution of Joan of Arc appears in textbooks from France, Montenegro and Serbia.

The trial and execution of women is most commonly presented using the example of the French queen Marie Antoinette. Her execution in the context of the French Revolution is the most commonly given example of a death sentence imposed on a woman in textbooks across all member states. Additionally, Albanian, Cypriot, French, Greek, Montenegrin and Spanish textbooks depict Olympe de Gouges, who defended women’s rights during the French Revolution, as a victim of an arbitrary death sentence: “Alongside the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, she published the Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen. In 1793, she protested the omission of women’s rights in the Constitution. Olympe de Gouges was accused of being an extremist and for opposing the death penalty against Louis XVI. She was sentenced to death by guillotine.”⁵³ Manon Roland, another prominent female figure of the French Revolution, was “accused of being a royalist and guillotined in 1793”.⁵⁴

Another notable example of the use of the death penalty against women is the case quoted in Serbian textbooks, of Mira Cikota, a young partisan and mother. Her farewell letter, written to her parents before her public execution by the Ustaša

Nazi regime in Bosnia in 1942, is reproduced in a Serbian textbook. This letter, as a historical source, reveals the human and intimate side of those sentenced to death. It highlights the emotional impact of the death penalty – not only on the individual facing execution, but also on their families and friends, and how it impacted the ideals they stood for.⁵⁵

The textbooks from Türkiye also address the theme of death sentences against women through the example of female activists in anti-colonial resistance movements. One textbook depicts the conviction of Djamila Bouhired, a militant anti-colonial activist in Algeria, whose death sentence was commuted to imprisonment. It highlights the international campaign that resulted in her death penalty being overturned and her subsequent release in 1962.⁵⁶

Religious groups

A specific form of discrimination that is mentioned in textbooks from all OHE member states is the persecution and execution of people from different religious groups. Textbooks usually introduce this topic in the context of the persecution of early Christians. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ is presented in this context in history textbooks from Albania, Serbia and Slovakia, and the persecution of Christians in general is dealt with in textbooks from Albania, Georgia, Luxembourg and North Macedonia. They show that religious movements challenged the ideological foundations and power of traditional elites, who responded to this by threatening their adversaries with capital punishment.

Even more prominent in the textbooks are the later processes of Christianisation and the associated persecution of non-Christians or people of different Christian denominations. History textbooks from Georgia and Luxembourg cover Charlemagne’s conquest of the “pagan” Saxons. The textbooks from Albania, Cyprus, France, Greece, Malta, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal,

⁵² Živković E. and Nedović L. (2021), p. 53.

⁵³ Dërguti M., Treska T. and Egro D. (2016), p. 86.

⁵⁴ Gatell Arimont C. et al. (2022b), p. 224.

⁵⁵ Todosijević A. and Petrović-Todosijević S. (2021), p. 115.

⁵⁶ Alemdar E. and Keleş S. (2021), p. 106.

Serbia, Slovakia, Spain and Ukraine cover the Inquisition, heresy and the persecution of scholars in the Middle Ages and the early modern period. They emphasise the entanglement of religious and political control. Georgian and Serbian textbooks, for example, cover the example of Jan Hus (1369-1415), a “Bohemian clergyman and theologian, who openly confronted the flaws in the Catholic Church of the mentioned era. His sermons spread quickly, but European political and religious circles declared him a heretic and put him to death.”⁵⁷ A frequently cited example of the persecution of scholars is that of Giordano Bruno, which appears in textbooks from Albania, France, Malta, Montenegro and Serbia: “Among the victims of the Church’s intolerance were two prominent scientists of the era, Giordano Bruno and Galileo Galilei. Bruno was burned at the stake for advocating his scientific ideas.”⁵⁸

In Cypriot textbooks, the execution of Archbishop Kyprianos in 1821 in the context of the Greek war of independence from the Ottoman Empire is the most frequently given example of the death penalty in relation to religion and the clergy: “On July 9, 1821, the arrest and execution of bishops and dignitaries from all over Cyprus began. The first victims were Archbishop Kyprianos and the three Metropolitans. For about a month, a wave of horror and death swept over the island.”⁵⁹ The Archbishop was hanged from a tree, which is illustrated in the textbook with a poem.⁶⁰

From criticism to abolition of the death penalty

In contrast to the depiction of court trials and executions, history textbook authors rarely provide historical examples for criticism of the death penalty. Instead, students are invited to adopt a critical perspective on the cruelty of the death penalty on the basis of contemporary debates.

In Spanish textbooks, for example, the treatment of the Code of Hammurabi is used to create a bridge to contemporary discourse on capital punishment and values such as empathy. Students are asked: “What does the Code of Hammurabi stipulate? If we read it from our modern perspective, does it seem fair?”⁶¹ A section called “Challenges of the future” notably links the death penalty, in the context of the French Revolution, to UN Sustainable Development Goal 16 – “Peace, justice and strong institutions” – and asks students to answer the question: “Do you think all countries should abolish the death penalty?”⁶²

French and Portuguese history textbooks are an exception. French textbooks explicitly present the criticism of torture and the death penalty that developed during the Enlightenment, embedding it in a presentation of the Enlightenment’s canon of values.⁶³ Portuguese textbooks, on the other hand, address the contradiction between the humanist values formulated by the Portuguese Enlightenment and the practice of enforcing the political power of absolutism by eliminating the old nobility, using the example of torture and the executions of the members of the Távora family. Students are asked: “What sentence did some members of the Távora family receive for plotting against King José I?” and invited to reflect on whether the violence of the punishment was intended to strengthen the power of the king against Enlightenment precepts.⁶⁴ Enlightenment debates on the death penalty are not juxtaposed with colonial practices during the same period.

Textbook authors also show that in some cases criticism of the death penalty came from the political elites themselves. Georgian textbooks describe how “[d]uring the period of Tamar’s rule, the practice of capital punishment was suspended, and the law stipulated that only criminals would be subjected to impalement, as outlined in the Old Testament. Tamar herself rejected capital

⁵⁷ Ugulava et al. (2023), p. 295.

⁵⁸ Dërguti M. and Treska T. (2016), p. 31.

⁵⁹ Pantelidou A., Protopapa K. and Yiallourides S. (1994), p. 102.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 103.

⁶¹ Gatell Arimont C. et al. (2022a), p. 167.

⁶² Ibid., p. 15.

⁶³ Chaudron E., Arias S. and Chaumard F. (2016), p. 29.

⁶⁴ Maia C. et al. (2022), p. 94.

punishment, cruel torture, and body mutilation.”⁶⁵ Irish and Turkish textbooks present students with arguments by the political elites of the Ottoman and British Empires critical of the death penalty, their perspective being that the execution of recognised political leaders of the regions striving for independence could lead to a weakening of central power.

In contrast to the numerous depictions of historical trials, death sentences and executions found in the textbooks of all OHTE member states, fewer textbooks address the movements and attempts to abolish the death penalty. History textbooks used in Luxembourg mention movements in favour of the abolition of the death penalty using the example of the first German parliament and the French National Assembly in 1848. They describe the parliamentary initiatives for the abolition of the death penalty in Germany and France in the context of the democratic movements of the 19th century.⁶⁶ Montenegrin textbooks also present the abolition of the death penalty for minor crimes by the Prussian king Frederick the Great.⁶⁷ Cypriot textbooks make reference to legal reforms and official decrees that are presented as attempts to limit arbitrary violence and to create formal protections for life in the context of the Ottoman administrative reforms. However, this does not include an explicit reference to the death penalty.⁶⁸

Georgian and Spanish textbooks address the abolition of the death penalty as part of the processes of democratisation and constitution making after the end of both the Russian Empire and the Franco dictatorship. Spanish textbooks establish a contemporary link between the constitutional process following the death of Franco and the topic of the death penalty. Spanish students learn about the central role of human rights and the rule of law in the formation of modern democratic political institutions by

studying the drafting and adoption of the 1978 constitution, which stipulates the abolition of the death penalty in Article 15.⁶⁹

In Georgian textbooks, the abolition of the death penalty is also discussed in the context of its constitution: “On 21 February 1921, the Constituent Assembly of Georgia adopted the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Georgia: Article 16. All citizens are equal before the law. Article 19. The death penalty is abolished.”⁷⁰ Greek textbooks indirectly allude to the abolition of the death penalty by including post-war international texts. The UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are quoted as foundational instruments that embed respect for life and legal safeguards: “[According to the] Universal Declaration of Human Rights ... Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.”⁷¹

Serbian textbooks mention the abolition of the death penalty at a general level within the teaching unit “Development and status of individual and collective rights from the 19th century to the present”, in a section dedicated to the Council of Europe.⁷² Macedonian textbooks present the abolition of the death penalty in relation to the pluralistic and democratic reforms introduced by Ramiz Alia, the last leader of communist Albania and the first president of the post-communist Republic of Albania.⁷³ Turkish textbooks offer a starting point for embedding the issue of the death penalty in a broader education for democracy by qualifying the execution of Prime Minister Adnan Menderes and his ministers after the 1960 military coup and the Yassada trials as “a black stain in the history of Turkish democracy”.⁷⁴

French history textbooks used in France and in Luxembourg present the arguments for and against the abolition of the death penalty in the debate of 1981. They use the execution

⁶⁵ Arkania G. et al. (2023), p. 93.

⁶⁶ Sauer M. (2022), pp. 318-320.

⁶⁷ Popović R. and Miranović D. (2019), p. 33.

⁶⁸ Pantelidou A., Protopapa K. and Yiallourides S. (1994), p. 106.

⁶⁹ Burgos M. and Muñoz-Delgado M. C. (2023f), p. 221.

⁷⁰ Abdaladze G. et al. (2012), p. 150.

⁷¹ Koliopoulos I. et al. (n.d.), p. 141.

⁷² Lopandić D., Milekić R. and Milinović M. (2021), p. 371.

⁷³ Ristovski B. et al. (2014), p. 133.

⁷⁴ Alemdar E. and Keleş S. (2021), p. 135.

of Christian Ranucci, who was sentenced to death and executed in 1976 for the murder of an eight-year-old girl despite doubts about his guilt, as a case study to introduce the issue of the abolition of the death penalty. An opportunity for discussing opposition to abolition is presented: "Despite public opinion being largely in favour of the death penalty, François Mitterrand decided, as soon as he was elected President of France, to have its abolition voted on by the National Assembly." Pupils are also encouraged to examine the arguments in favour of the abolition the death penalty that were made in a speech: "Why and on what grounds does Robert Badinter advocate for the abolition of the death penalty?"⁷⁵

An example where the death penalty had not yet been abolished but a death sentence was commuted can be found in a Greek textbook. Regarding the trial of the former military junta in 1967, the textbook states that the 'leaders of the dictatorship were put on trial and the most prominent among them were sentenced to death because, by overthrowing the democracy, they committed the crime of high treason, that is, they betrayed the fatherland. However, their sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, as it was deemed unnecessary to execute them.'⁷⁶ However, the reasoning behind this decision is not explained.

Visual representations of the death penalty

The history textbooks examined use a great variety of visuals to illustrate the topic of trials and executions. In quantitative terms, pictorial sources represent the most common type of visual aid used in the depiction of the death penalty in history textbooks.⁷⁷

The vast majority of images used in the context of the death penalty, in the form of paintings, drawings and photographs, show those sentenced to death immediately before or during their



German Reichsmarschall, Commander of the Luftwaffe Hermann Goering (1893–1946) during cross examination at his trial for war crimes in Room 600 at the Palace of Justice during the International Military Tribunal (IMT), Nuremberg, Germany, 1946. Wikimedia, public domain.

execution. For executions before the invention of the camera, there is often either a painting of the execution or a painted portrait of the person facing the death sentence. Images that could help students understand the character of historical trials are rather rare. Portuguese textbooks, for example, use pictorial representations to help students understand the trials of the Inquisition, for example the arbitrary arrest and torture of Damião de Góis.⁷⁸ Modern executions after the invention of photography, for example the execution of Nikos Beloyannis as included in Greek textbooks,⁷⁹ are visually supported by either showing photographs of the trials or photographs of the person facing the death sentence, and not of the execution itself. Photographs of the Stalinist show trials or of the Nuremberg Trials could offer ideas for the understanding of historical trials as context for the death penalty.

Sometimes, the inclusion of images may serve as a prompt for reflection on contradictory concepts or perspectives. For example, the contemporary painting of the execution of the Távora family in 1758 is also a didactic tool to encourage students to reflect on the contradiction between the humanist aspirations of the Portuguese Enlightenment

⁷⁵ Hoop G. d' (2020), p. 234.

⁷⁶ Louvi E. and Xifaras D. (n.d.), p. 159.

⁷⁷ Primary textual sources such as letters, tracts or legal texts are less frequently used. An exception where textual artistic sources are frequently used is Cypriot textbooks, which employ poems to engage with the topic of the death penalty.

⁷⁸ Maia C. et al. (2022), pp. 70-71.

⁷⁹ Louvi E. and Xifaras D. (n.d.), p. 152.



Nuremberg Trials. Looking down on defendants dock, circa 1945–1946. Wikimedia, public domain.

and the cruel practices of the criminal justice of Portuguese absolutism. Elsewhere, drawings illustrating the execution of Louis XVI in the textbooks from Ireland, France, Luxembourg, Portugal and Spain show the crowds present at the event, but also emphasise the presence of the National Guard, showing that military protection was needed to ensure the execution was carried out without disruption. This offers an opportunity for discussing the role of “common” people both in support for and opposition to the death penalty in history. An Irish activity book encourages deeper reflection using contemporary visual sources on the use of torture and capital punishment in the Middle Ages. The students are asked, “How many forms of medieval torture can you see in [the] image?” and to explain “why there are spectators in [the] image.”⁸⁰ Using the example of the decapitation of

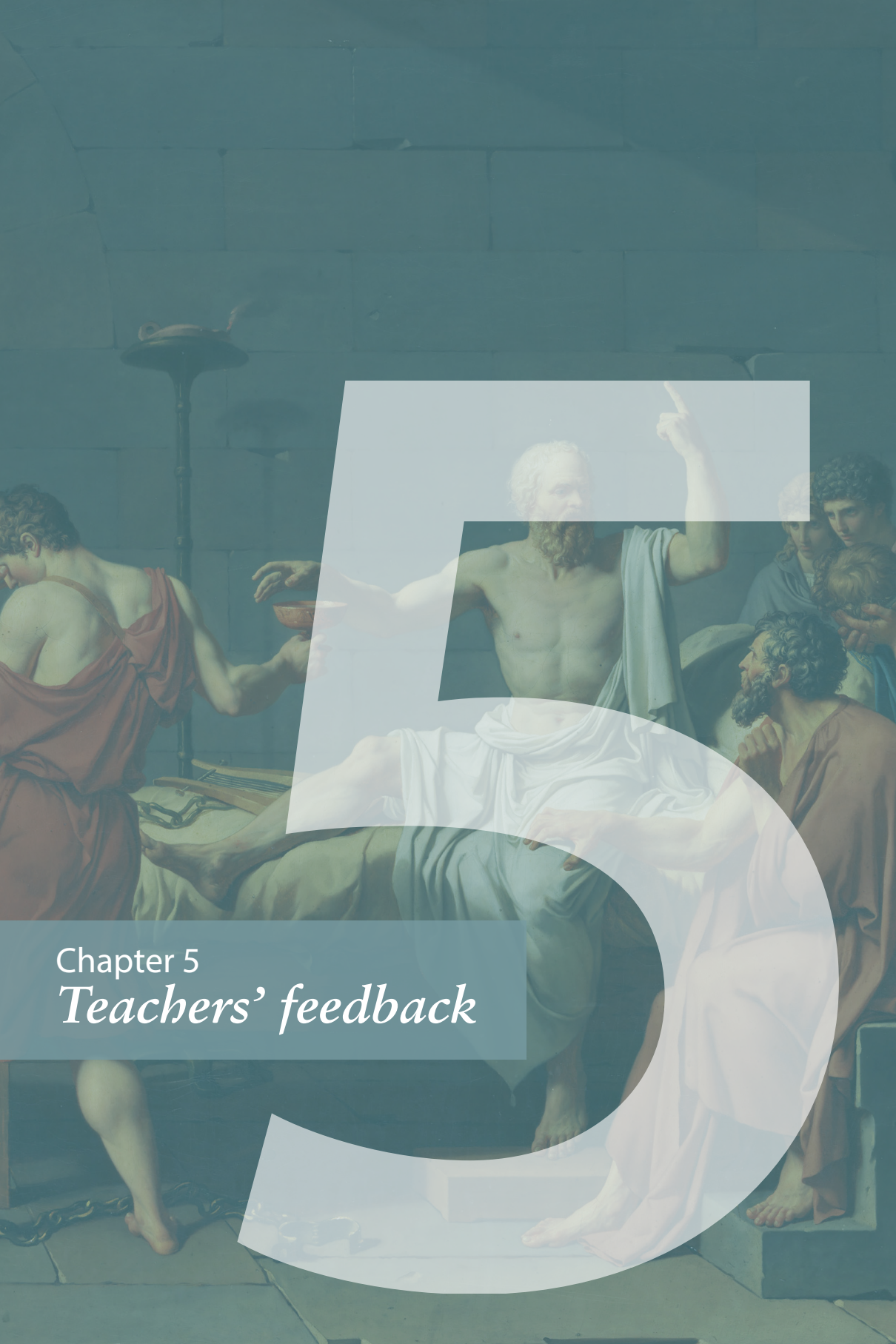
Louis XVI, the activity book also invites students to reflect on the perspective and intention of the artist: “Do you think the artist supports or opposes the French Revolution? Explain.”⁸¹

In some instances, the world of art may offer opportunities for discussions of the death penalty. For example, French and Portuguese textbooks draw on contemporary artists’ engagement with the death penalty to link past and present perspectives on the subject. Portuguese history textbooks do so by using the example of the witch hunt memorial in Vardø, Norway to address the arbitrary trials and executions of women. The memorial was built in 2011 based on plans by the architect Peter Zumthor and combined with an installation by the artist Louise Bourgeois.⁸²

⁸⁰ Browne J. and O’Connor C. (2023b), p. 40.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁸² Pinto A. S., Torres M. and Monteiro de Barros M. (2022), p. 70.



Chapter 5
Teachers' feedback

The majority of the 95 teachers from Armenia, Cyprus, Greece, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Türkiye and Ukraine who provided feedback for this study reported that they addressed the death penalty in history lessons in some form. In those member states where the curriculum does not stipulate coverage of the death penalty, they address the topic on their own initiative. However, teachers from all countries who provided feedback expressed their wish to be better professionally prepared to explore the topic in more depth in a specially designated lesson. Teachers emphasised above all the potential to address the death penalty using the example of the violence and arbitrariness of colonial rule and the political criminal justice systems of 20th-century dictatorships.

In contrast to the coverage of the death penalty itself, however, teachers tend to see fewer opportunities to address criticism of the death

penalty and the movement for its abolition. Therefore, they would like to see stronger curricular and educational media support to enable them to teach about the movement for the abolition of the death penalty.

Teachers primarily cited their commitment to the right to life as their motivation for addressing the abolition of the death penalty in history lessons. They referred above all to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states in Article 3: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."⁸³ However, initiatives by the Council of Europe to abolish the death penalty or the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union were not mentioned.

Ukrainian teachers, in particular, emphasised that the concept of human and civil rights originated in Europe and has become an important element of the self-understanding of European societies. Therefore, they stressed the importance of

⁸³ See www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights, accessed 26 February 2026.



Eleanor Roosevelt and United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Lake Success, New York. Courtesy: National Archives and Records Administration.

familiarising pupils with the historical development of human and civil rights in Europe. They underlined the importance of teaching them the arguments for and against the death penalty as well as comparing international practice.

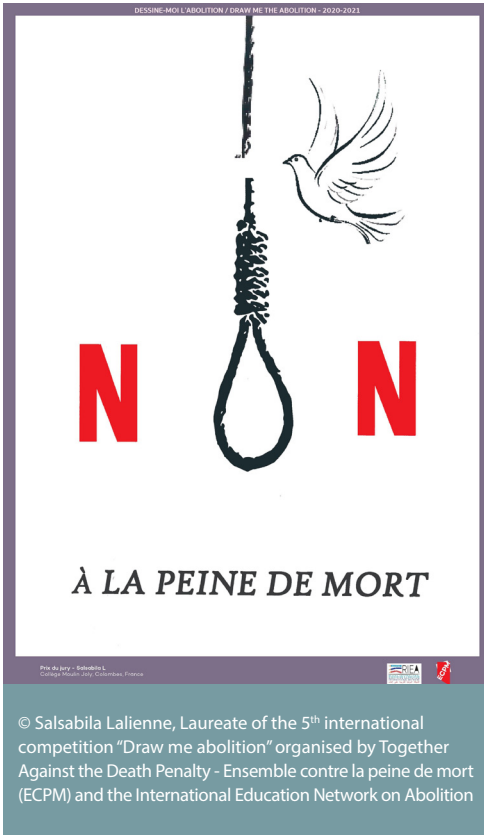
The majority of the teachers saw the topic of the death penalty as a sensitive issue to teach. Their reasons were firstly, that referencing the death penalty might be upsetting for some pupils due to the depiction of violence involved. For instance, a teacher from Montenegro voiced the concern that “such images can have a negative emotional impact on students and may distract from the historical understanding [they] aim to promote”. On the other hand, a Cypriot teacher highlighted the potential of visual sources to “help students understand the gravity of the issue and stimulate ethical discussions about state-sanctioned violence and non-violence”. Second, students may also be affected on a personal level. The death penalty may have been abolished in almost all of Europe, but not all students’ families live in, or originate from, those countries. Teachers from Türkiye noted that if “any of the students have a family member who

has experienced such a punishment, this topic can be sensitive for them” and that “in addition, as our country’s history has witnessed many conflicts, students may have family stories related to such events. This can trigger their sensitivities in the classroom.”

According to teachers from Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal and Serbia, their pupils expressed a personal interest in the topic of capital punishment and obtained their information primarily from social media, with visual representations of the death penalty playing a particularly important role. The participating teachers therefore emphasised the importance of working with visual sources when addressing the topic of the death penalty in their history lessons. They advocated the use of audiovisual media as a means of addressing the emotional dimension of learning about the subject. In this context, a teacher from Luxembourg highlighted the dangers of visual sources depicting executions and execution tools in isolation, and advocated for visuals to be carefully contextualised through the use of author-written texts, other written sources and tasks.



The Death of Socrates (Jacques-Louis David, 1787). Oil on canvas, 129.5 × 196.2 cm (51.0 × 77.2 in). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



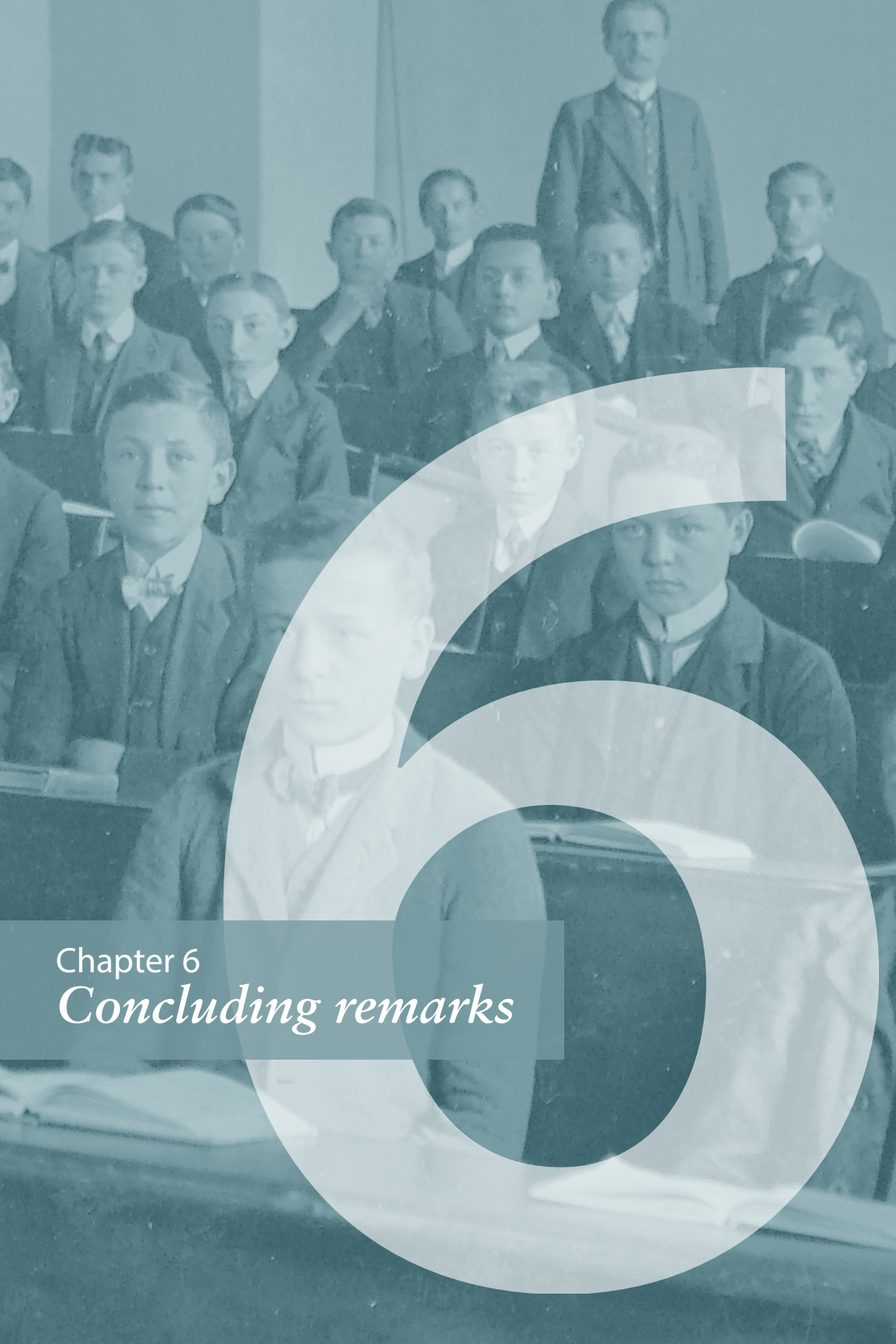
“

I discuss international charters and conventions, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which emphasise the right to life and the protection of human dignity.”

– teacher from Montenegro

Teachers from all countries emphasised the need to link the past with the present when dealing with the death penalty and the movement for its abolition. A Portuguese teacher emphasised: “It is important, even when working with the historical context, to highlight that the death penalty still exists legally and is still used (for example in the United States of America and China).” A teacher from Montenegro underlined the necessity to strengthen arguments in favour of the abolition of the death penalty mainly by referring to key human rights documents and historical developments: “For example, I discuss international charters and conventions, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which emphasise the right to life and the protection of human dignity.”

The majority of the participating teachers advocated linking the treatment of the topic in history lessons with civics lessons. A Cypriot teacher advocated for teaching the topic within the framework of an interdisciplinary human rights education, which would “give students a more holistic and nuanced understanding of the issue, showing how it is not just a historical fact but a living, evolving human rights issue”. A Montenegrin teacher identified the United Nations Human Rights Day as a good opportunity to teach about the history of the death penalty and its abolition in an interdisciplinary perspective. It appears therefore that this topic may offer a springboard for further investigating the potential of history education as a part of social sciences education.



Chapter 6

Concluding remarks



The history curricula of the OHTE member states provide few explicitly prescribed teaching opportunities for discussing the death penalty and its abolition. Only the curricula of France, Ireland and Malta explicitly define the death penalty as a topic for history education.

The history curricula of the other OHTE member states do not explicitly mention the death penalty or the national and international movements for its abolition. However, the curricula do provide a wide range of suggestions and space for the treatment of the death penalty and the movements for its abolition from ancient history (e.g. ancient Mesopotamia) to the recent past. The majority of the participating teachers expressed a desire or at least willingness to teach about the abolition of the death penalty and would like more curricular guidance in the teaching of the topic.

The history textbooks of the OHTE member states offer information on the topic and propose different approaches for its treatment in history lessons. Such information and approaches are often provided through author-written texts as well as textual and visual sources.

Depictions of the death penalty are, however, in most cases fragmented and not part of a visible common thread of human rights education, including education on the right to life and the prevention of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. In many textbooks, individual cases where the death penalty has been applied are simply mentioned as fact. There are, however, notable exceptions where pupils are asked to voice their opinion on the sentence, or where they are provided with more details of their circumstances. Participating teachers support this by encouraging their pupils to express their opinions on the matter and discuss them in a broader human rights-based framework.

The textbooks mainly focus on depictions of executions with details of accusations, trials and death sentences being secondary. Criticism of the death penalty as well as movements for the abolition and prohibition of the death penalty, on

the other hand, take up much less space. Criticism of the death penalty is directed above all at the arbitrariness of the legal proceedings on which the death sentences were based and the inhumane methods used for the executions, rather than at the death penalty itself. Most of the surveyed teachers agreed that there is currently insufficient material provided to teach students about the criticism of, and the movements for, abolishing the death penalty and therefore suggested that curricula and educational media pay more attention to these areas.

The school textbooks of Albania, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain provide information on the historical development of national and international laws containing provisions on the death penalty. This information provides a solid basis for a better understanding of the Council of Europe's initiatives to enable binding provisions on the prohibition of the death penalty in the national legislation of its member states backed up by international commitments, even if these initiatives are not explicitly mentioned.

In-depth case studies provide particularly suitable opportunities for addressing the death penalty and its abolition in history lessons. The repetition of examples and case studies across multiple historical periods also provides a basis for tracing change and continuity over time. For example, French textbooks combine descriptions of trials and judgments from earlier historical periods with modern criticisms of the death penalty and the movement for its abolition. Similarly, the Irish textbook for the Junior Cycle continuously addresses the topic from ancient times to the 20th century.

Visual aids play an important role in the presentation of the death penalty in history textbooks. The range of pictorial representations refrains from glorifying violence or suffering in relation to the death penalty. Participating teachers value visual material for its potential to pique student interest in the topic, which may be further fuelled by exposure to imagery of the



School classroom with teacher and pupils, Hungary, c. 1930s. Fortepan / Album018. CC BY-SA 3.0.

death penalty outside of school, for example on television or in video games. Teachers are, however, also aware of the potentially upsetting nature of visual depictions of violence and prefer more subtle visual material.

Teachers participating in the feedback round pointed out that the death penalty is currently more often explicitly addressed as a topic in civics or philosophy curricula rather than in the history curriculum. At the same time, they underlined that history lessons can provide knowledge and critical thinking skills for teaching and learning

about the death penalty and its abolition. Knowing about the past can provide valuable information that strengthens pupils' understanding of human rights and how Europe has arrived at its status quo. Teachers indicated that the curricula and textbooks for history lessons could create links with the curricula for civics, philosophy or education about religions. They also agreed that a broader interdisciplinary approach would make it easier to fit the topic of the abolition of the death penalty into an already packed curriculum and would better utilise its potential for human rights education.

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List of analysed curricula

Albania

ISCED-2

Ministria e Arsimit dhe Sportit, Instituti i Zhvillimit të Arsimit (2014), *Programi i lëndës së historisë në arsimin bazë, Shkalla e tretë.*

Ministria e Arsimit dhe Sportit, Instituti i Zhvillimit të Arsimit (2015), *Programi i lëndës së historisë në arsimin bazë, Shkalla e tretë, Klasa e VII-të.*

Ministria e Arsimit dhe Sportit, Instituti i Zhvillimit të Arsimit (2016), *Kurrikula e bazuar në kompetenca. Fusha: Histori, Shkalla IV, Klasa VIII.*

Ministria e Arsimit, Sportit dhe Rinisë, Agjencia e Sigurimit të Cilësisë së Arsimit Parauniversitar (2019), *Programi i lëndës së historisë. Shkalla e katërt. Klasa IX.*

ISCED-3

Ministria e Arsimit dhe Sportit, Instituti i Zhvillimit të Arsimit (n.d.), *Programi i lëndës së historisë. Shkalla e pestë. Klasa e dhjetë.*

Ministria e Arsimit, Sportit dhe Rinisë, Agjencia e Sigurimit të Cilësisë së Arsimit Parauniversitar (2019), *Programi i lëndës së historisë. Shkalla e pestë. Klasa XI.*

Ministria e Arsimit, Sportit dhe Rinisë, Agjencia e Sigurimit të Cilësisë së Arsimit Parauniversitar (2019), *Programi i lëndës së historisë. Shkalla e gjashtë. Klasa XII.*

Andorra

ISCED-2

Ministeri d'Educació i Ensenyament Superior (2022), *Programa de ciències humanes i socials de segona ensenyança de l'Escola Andorrana.*

ISCED-3

Butlletí Oficial del Principat d'Andorra (2019), *Decret de publicació del programa de l'assignatura d'història del batxillerat general de l'Escola Andorrana.*

Armenia

ISCED-2

ՀՀ կրթության, գիտության, մշակույթի և սպորտի նախարարի 04.02.2025թ.-ի N 12-Ն հրամանը հանրակրթական ուսումնական հաստատությունների «Հայրենագիտություն» բնագավառի «Իմ հայրենիքը» (5-րդ դասարան), «Իմ հայրենիքն ու աշխարհը» (6-րդ դասարան), «Հայաստանի պատմություն» (7-12-րդ դասարաններ) առարկաների չափորոշիչները հաստատելու մասին.

ՀՀ կրթության, գիտության, մշակույթի և սպորտի նախարարի 03.02.2025թ.-ի N 11-Ն հրամանը հանրակրթական ուսումնական հաստատությունների 5-րդ դասարանի «Իմ հայրենիքը», 6-րդ դասարանի «Իմ հայրենիքն ու աշխարհը», 7-12-րդ դասարանների «Հայաստանի պատմություն» առարկաների ծրագրերը հաստատելու մասին.

ՀՀ կրթության, գիտության, մշակույթի և սպորտի նախարարի 30.11.2022թ.-ի N 70-Ն հրամանը հանրակրթական ուսումնական հաստատությունների 7-րդ և 10-րդ դասարանների «Համաշխարհային պատմություն» առարկայի ծրագրերը հաստատելու մասին.

ՀՀ կրթության, գիտության, մշակույթի և սպորտի նախարարի 30.03.2023թ.-ի N 31-Ն հրամանը հանրակրթական ուսումնական հաստատություններում «Համաշխարհային պատմություն» առարկայի 7-12-րդ դասարանների առարկայական չափորոշիչը հաստատելու մասին.

ISCED-3

ՀՀ կրթության, գիտության, մշակույթի և սպորտի նախարարի 04.02.2025թ.-ի N 12-Ն հրամանը հանրակրթական ուսումնական հաստատությունների «Հայրենագիտություն» բնագավառի «Իմ հայրենիքը» (5-րդ դասարան), «Իմ հայրենիքն ու աշխարհը» (6-րդ դասարան), «Հայաստանի պատմություն» (7-12-րդ դասարաններ) առարկաների չափորոշիչները հաստատելու մասին.

ՀՀ կրթության, գիտության, մշակույթի և սպորտի նախարարի 03.02.2025թ.-ի N 11-Ն հրամանը հանրակրթական ուսումնական հաստատությունների 5-րդ դասարանի «Իմ հայրենիքը», 6-րդ դասարանի «Իմ հայրենիքն ու աշխարհը», 7-12-րդ դասարանների «Հայաստանի պատմություն» առարկաների ծրագրերը հաստատելու մասին.

ՀՀ կրթության, գիտության, մշակույթի և սպորտի նախարարի 30.11.2022թ.-ի N 70-Ն հրամանը հանրակրթական ուսումնական հաստատությունների 7-րդ և 10-րդ դասարանների «Համաշխարհային պատմություն» առարկայի ծրագրերը հաստատելու մասին.

ՀՀ կրթության, գիտության, մշակույթի և սպորտի նախարարի 03.07.2023 թ. -ի N 83-Ն հրամանը հանրակրթական ուսումնական հաստատությունների 8-րդ և 11-րդ դասարանների «Համաշխարհային պատմություն» առարկայի ծրագրերը հաստատելու մասին.

ՀՀ կրթության, գիտության, մշակույթի և սպորտի նախարարի 20.06.2024թ.-ի N 50-Ն հրամանը հանրակրթական ուսումնական հաստատությունների 9-րդ 7 12-րդ դասարանների «Համաշխարհային պատմություն» առարկայի ծրագրերը հաստատելու մասին.

Cyprus

ISCED-2

Υπουργείο Παιδείας, Αθλητισμού και Νεολαίας Κύπρου (2019), *ΑΝΑΛΥΤΙΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑΣ Α΄ ΓΥΜΝΑΣΙΟΥ*.

Υπουργείο Παιδείας, Αθλητισμού και Νεολαίας Κύπρου (2019), *ΑΝΑΛΥΤΙΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑΣ Β΄ ΓΥΜΝΑΣΙΟΥ*.

Υπουργείο Παιδείας, Αθλητισμού και Νεολαίας Κύπρου (2019), *ΑΝΑΛΥΤΙΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑΣ Γ΄ ΓΥΜΝΑΣΙΟΥ*.

ISCED-3

Υπουργείο Παιδείας, Αθλητισμού και Νεολαίας Κύπρου (2019), *ΑΝΑΛΥΤΙΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑΣ Α΄ ΛΥΚΕΙΟΥ ΚΟΙΝΟΥ ΚΟΡΜΟΥ*.

Υπουργείο Παιδείας, Αθλητισμού και Νεολαίας Κύπρου (2019), *ΑΝΑΛΥΤΙΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑΣ Α΄ ΛΥΚΕΙΟΥ ΠΡΟΣΑΝΑΤΟΛΙΣΜΟΥ*.

Υπουργείο Παιδείας, Αθλητισμού και Νεολαίας Κύπρου (2019), *ΑΝΑΛΥΤΙΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑΣ Β΄ ΛΥΚΕΙΟΥ ΚΟΙΝΟΥ ΚΟΡΜΟΥ*.

Υπουργείο Παιδείας, Αθλητισμού και Νεολαίας Κύπρου (2019), *ΑΝΑΛΥΤΙΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑΣ Β΄ ΛΥΚΕΙΟΥ ΚΑΤΕΥΘΥΝΣΗΣ*.

Υπουργείο Παιδείας, Αθλητισμού και Νεολαίας Κύπρου (2019), *ΑΝΑΛΥΤΙΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑΣ Γ΄ ΛΥΚΕΙΟΥ ΚΟΙΝΟΥ ΚΟΡΜΟΥ*.

Υπουργείο Παιδείας, Αθλητισμού και Νεολαίας Κύπρου (2019), *ΑΝΑΛΥΤΙΚΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑΣ Γ΄ ΛΥΚΕΙΟΥ ΚΑΤΕΥΘΥΝΣΗΣ*.

France

ISCED-2

Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche (2016), *Programme pour les Cycles 2, 3, 4*.

ISCED-3

Ministère de l'Éducation nationale et de la Jeunesse, Le Bulletin officiel de l'éducation nationale, de la jeunesse et des sports (2019), *Programme d'histoire-géographie de seconde générale et technologique*.

Ministère de l'Éducation nationale et de la Jeunesse, Le Bulletin officiel de l'éducation nationale, de la jeunesse et des sports (2019), *Programme d'histoire-géographie de première générale*.

Ministère de l'Éducation nationale et de la Jeunesse, Le Bulletin officiel de l'éducation nationale, de la jeunesse et des sports (2019), *Programme d'histoire-géographie de terminale générale*.

Georgia

საქართველოს განათლებისა და მეცნიერების სამინისტრო, მესამე თაობის ეროვნული სასწავლო გეგმა (2018-2024).

Greece

ISCED-2

Υπουργείο Παιδείας, Θρησκευμάτων και Αθλητισμού μετά από εισηγήσεις του Ινστιτούτου Εκπαιδευτικής Πολιτικής (Ι.Ε.Π.), *Οδηγίες Διδασκαλίας Για Το Μάθημα Ιστορίας Α΄, Β΄ Και Γ΄ Τάξεων Γυμνασίου Για Το Σχολικό Έτος 2022-2023.*

ISCED-3

Υπουργείο Παιδείας, Θρησκευμάτων και Αθλητισμού μετά από εισηγήσεις του Ινστιτούτου Εκπαιδευτικής Πολιτικής (Ι.Ε.Π.), *Οδηγίες Διδασκαλίας Ιστορίας Γενικού Λυκείου Για Το Σχολικό Έτος 2022-2023. Οδηγίες Διδασκαλίας των μαθημάτων ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑ Α΄, Β΄ Τάξης και ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑ Γενικής Παιδείας Γ΄ Τάξης Ημερήσιου και Εσπερινού Γενικού Λυκείου.*

Ireland

ISCED-2

Department of Education and Science, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2017), *Junior Cycle.*

ISCED-3

Department of Education and Science, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2003), *Leaving Certificate. History Syllabus. (Ordinary and higher level).*

Luxembourg

ISCED-2

Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse (2024), *Enseignement secondaire général. Classes inférieures. Division – Section – HISTO – HISTOIRE Programme 7G.*

Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse (2023), *Enseignement secondaire général. Classes inférieures. Division – Section – HISTO – HISTOIRE Programme 6G.*

Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse (2023), *Enseignement secondaire classique. Classes inférieures HISTO – HISTOIRE Programme 6C Toutes.*

Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse (2023), *Enseignement secondaire général. Classes inférieures Division – Section – HISTO – HISTOIRE Programme 5G.*

Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse (2024), *Enseignement secondaire Classique Classes inférieures HISTO – HISTOIRE Programme 5C Toutes.*

Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse (2023), *Enseignement secondaire classique. Classes inférieures HISTO – HISTOIRE Programme 7C Toutes.*

ISCED-3

Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse (2022), *Enseignement secondaire Classique Classes supérieures – classes de 3e et 2e Section I HISTO – Histoire Programme directeur.*

Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse (n.d.), *Enseignement secondaire Classes internationales Régime francophone HISTO Histoire Programme 4I-FR-A_4I-FR-F.*

Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse (2023), *Enseignement secondaire Classique Classes supérieures HISTO – HISTOIRE Programme 4C Toutes.*

Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse (n.d.), *Enseignement secondaire. Classes internationales Régime francophone HISTO Histoire Programme 3I-FR-A_3I-FR-F.*

Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse (2023), *Enseignement secondaire classique Classes supérieures HISTO – Histoire Programme 3C Toutes.*

Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse (2022), *Enseignement secondaire Classique Classes supérieures – classes de 3e Section I HISTO – Histoire Programme.*

Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse (2024), *Enseignement secondaire classique Classes supérieures Histo – Histoire Programme 2C Toutes.*

Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse (2022), *Enseignement secondaire Classique Classes supérieures – classes de 2e Section I HISTO – Histoire Programme.*

Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse (2023), *Enseignement secondaire classique. Classes supérieures. Histo – Histoire. Programme 1C (sections A, B, C, D, G).*

Malta

ISCED-2

Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes. History Department, Curriculum Centre Annex, Floriana. *History Learning & Assessment Programme Year 7.*

Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes. History Department, Curriculum Centre Annex, Floriana. *History Learning & Assessment Programme Year 8.*

ISCED-3

Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes. History Department, Curriculum Centre Annex, Floriana. *History (General) Syllabus for Year 9 as part of Environmental Studies.*

Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes. History Department, Curriculum Centre Annex, Floriana. *History (Option) School Syllabus for Year 9.*

Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes. History Department Curriculum Centre Annex, Floriana. *History (General) Syllabus for Year 10 as part of Environmental Studies.*

Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes. History Department, Curriculum Centre Annex, Floriana. *History (Option) School Syllabus for Year 10.*

Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes. History Department Curriculum Centre Annex, Floriana. *History (General) Syllabus for Year 11 as part of Environmental Studies.*

Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes. History Department, Curriculum Centre Annex, Floriana. *History (Option) School Syllabus for Year 11.*

Montenegro

ISCED-2

Zavod za školstvo (2017), *Predmetni program Istorija: VI, VII, VIII i IX razred osnovne škole.*

ISCED-3

Zavod za školstvo (2020), *Predmetni program Istorija za I, II, III i IV razred gimnazije.*

North Macedonia

ISCED-2

Министерство за образование и наука (2008), *ИСТОРИЈА VI – ДЕВЕТГОДИШНО.*

Министерство за образование и наука (2014), *ИСТОРИЈА VII – ДЕВЕТГОДИШНО.*

Министерство за образование и наука (2004), *ОСНОВНО ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ – ПРЕДМЕТНА НАСТАВА – НАСТАВНА ПРОГРАМА ПО ИСТОРИЈА VII ОДДЕЛЕНИЕ.*

Министерство за образование и наука (2004), *ОСНОВНО ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ – ПРЕДМЕТНА НАСТАВА – НАСТАВНА ПРОГРАМА ПО ИСТОРИЈА VIII ОДДЕЛЕНИЕ.*

ISCED-3

Министарство за образовање и наука (2004), *НАСТАВНА ПРОГРАМА ПО ИСТОРИЈА ИЗБОРЕН ПРЕДМЕТ ЗА IV ГОДИНА*.

Министарство за образовање и наука (2005), *НАСТАВНА ПРОГРАМА ПО ИСТОРИЈА ЗА III ГОДИНА ГИМНАЗИСКО ОБРАЗОВАЊЕ*.

Министарство за образовање и наука (2005), *НАСТАВНА ПРОГРАМА ПО ИСТОРИЈА ЗА II ГОДИНА ГИМНАЗИСКО ОБРАЗОВАЊЕ*.

Министарство за образовање и наука (2005), *НАСТАВНА ПРОГРАМА ПО ИСТОРИЈА ЗА I ГОДИНА ГИМНАЗИСКО ОБРАЗОВАЊЕ*.

Portugal

ISCED-2

Direção-Geral da Educação (2022), 7.º ANO | 3.º Ciclo do Ensino Básico História.

Direção-Geral da Educação (2022), 8.º ANO | 3.º Ciclo do Ensino Básico História.

Direção-Geral da Educação (2022), 9.º ANO | 3.º Ciclo do Ensino Básico História.

ISCED-3

Direção-Geral da Educação (2022), 10.º ANO | Ensino Secundário História A.

Direção-Geral da Educação (2022), 10.º ANO | Ensino Secundário História B.

Direção-Geral da Educação (2022), 11.º ANO | Ensino Secundário História A.

Direção-Geral da Educação (2022), 11.º ANO | Ensino Secundário História B.

Direção-Geral da Educação (2022), 12.º ANO | Ensino Secundário História A.

Serbia

ISCED-2

5. разред, Просветни гласник СГ Републике Србије 15/2018.

6. разред, Просветни гласник СГ Републике Србије 15/2018.

7. разред, Просветни гласник СГ Републике Србије 5/2019.

8. разред, Просветни гласник СГ Републике Србије 11/2019.

ISCED-3

ГИМНАЗИЈА, Просветни гласник СГ Републике Србије 4/2020.

Slovakia

ISCED-2

Štátny pedagogický ústav (2015), *Dejepis – nižšie stredné vzdelávanie*.

ISCED-3

Štátny pedagogický ústav (2015), *Dejepis – gymnázium so štvorročným a päťročným vzdelávacím programom*.

Slovenia

ISCED-2

Ministrstvo za Šolstvo, znanost in Šport, Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo (2011), *Program osnovna šola ZGODOVINA Učni načrt*.

ISCED-3

Ministrstvo za Šolstvo, znanost in Šport, Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo (2008), *Gimnazija Učni Načrt Obvezni Predmet (280 Ur) Zgodovina Splošna Gimnazija*.

Spain

ISCED-2

Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional (2022), *Real Decreto 157/2022, de 1 de marzo, por el que se establecen la ordenación y las enseñanzas mínimas de la Educación Primaria*.

ISCED-3

Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional (2022), *Real Decreto 217/2022, de 29 de marzo, por el que se establece la ordenación y las enseñanzas mínimas de la Educación Secundaria Obligatoria*.

Türkiye

T.C. Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı (2018), *T.C. İnkılap Tarihi Ve Atatürkçülük Dersi Öğretim Programı (Ortaokul 8. Sınıf)*.

T.C. Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı (2022), *Ortaöğretim. Ortak Türk Tarihi Dersi Öğretim Programı*.

T.C. Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı (2023), *Ortaöğretim. Ortak Türk Tarih Dersi (9, 10 ve 11. Sınıflar) Öğretim Programı*.

T.C. Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı (2018), *T.C. İnkılap Tarihi Ve Atatürkçülük Dersi Öğretim Programı*.

T.C. Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı (2018), *Ortaöğretim. Çağdaş Türk ve Dünya Tarihi Dersi Öğretim Programı*.

Ukraine

ISCED-2

Міністерство освіти і науки України (2022), *Всесвітня Історія. Історія України (Інтегрований курс) 6 клас*.

Міністерство освіти і науки України (2022), *Всесвітня Історія. Історія України. 7-9 клас*.

ISCED-3

Міністерство освіти і науки України (2022), *Всесвітня Історія. Історія України. 10-11 клас*.

APPENDIX 2

List of analysed textbooks

Albania

Dërguti M. and Treska T. (2016), *Histori 7*, Albas, Tirana.

Dërguti M. and Treska T. (2017), *Histori 8*, Albas, Tirana.

Dërguti M. and Treska T. (2025), *Histori 6*, Albas, Tirana.

Dërguti M., Treska T. and Egro D. (2016), *Histori 10*, Albas, Tirana.

Dërguti M. et al. (2017), *Histori 11*, Albas, Tirana.

Dërguti M. et al. (2018a), *Histori 9*, Albas, Tirana.

Dërguti M. et al. (2018b), *Histori 12*, Albas, Tirana.

Armenia

Melkonyan A., Movsisyan A. and Danielyan E. (2023a), Հայոց պատմություն 6: Մաս 1, Zangak, Yerevan.

Melkonyan A., Movsisyan A. and Danielyan E. (2023b), Հայոց պատմություն 6: Մաս 2, Zangak, Yerevan.

Melkonyan A., Simonyan A. and Nazaryan A. (2021a), Հայոց պատմություն (ընդհ. և բնագիտամաթ. հոսքերի համար), Zangak, Yerevan.

Melkonyan A., Simonyan A. and Nazaryan A. (2021b), Հայոց պատմություն (հում. հոսքերի համար), Zangak, Yerevan.

Melkonyan A. et al. (2015), Հայոց պատմություն 11: Ընդհանուր և բնագիտամաթեմատիկական հոսք, Zangak, Yerevan.

Melkonyan A. et al. (2023a), Հայոց պատմություն 8: Մաս 1, Zangak, Yerevan.

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APPENDIX 3

Number of teachers per member state who provided feedback on the topic



Albania, Andorra, France, Georgia, Ireland, Slovenia, Spain = n/a

Contributors

The research for this report was carried out by a team of experts at the Leibniz Institute for Educational Media | Georg Eckert Institute (GEI), represented by GEI director Eckhardt Fuchs and coordinated by Steffen Sammler and Lenja Gloger.

Contextual information on the political and legal dimensions of the death penalty and its abolition was provided and verified by Sébastien Potaufeu, Coordinator for the Abolition of the Death Penalty at the Council of Europe, and by the International Academic Network for the Abolition of Capital Punishment (REPECAP), represented by Luis Arroyo Zapatero and William Schabas.

The analyses of curricula and textbooks, translations from national languages, and collection of feedback from teachers were done by a group of experts in history education from the OHTE member states: Eleni Apostolidou, Marc Birchen, Adrian Cetera,

Önder Cetin, Marília Gago, Maria Georgiou, Maryna Kaftan, Marina López Leal, Esilda Luku, Narek Manukyan, Lali Mekerishvili, Jonathan Muscat, Yulia Ostropalchenko, Marija Peković, Igor Radulović, Damjan Snoj, Marko Šuica, Lidija Županić Šuica, as well as the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research.

The scientific rigour of the report was ensured by the OHTE Scientific Advisory Council, which is composed of renowned persons in the field of history teaching and learning.

Country-specific questions were addressed by the OHTE Governing Board, which is the OHTE's decision-making body and is composed of one representative from each member state.

The Secretariat of the OHTE co-ordinated the overall production and publication of the report.

The abolition of the death penalty in Europe is a recent and fragile achievement. For young generations who have grown up in countries where it is abolished, this achievement can feel self-evident. Yet, it was the outcome of deliberate struggle. Learning about the history behind the abolition movement is key to understanding that human rights can only be secured through sustained commitment over time.

The mission of the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe (OHTE) is to provide a clear picture of how history is taught in its member states. With contributions from the Leibniz Institute for Educational Media | Georg Eckert Institute (GEI), the Council of Europe Coordinator for the abolition of the death penalty and the International Academic Network for the Abolition of Capital Punishment (REPECAP), this ad hoc study looks at the portrayal of the death penalty and its abolition in history education in the OHTE member states.

In the context of the ongoing international movements for the abolition of the death penalty, particularly the efforts of the Council of Europe towards achieving a death penalty-free zone in Europe, this study demonstrates the essential role of history education in reinforcing learners' appreciation of human dignity, justice and equality.

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