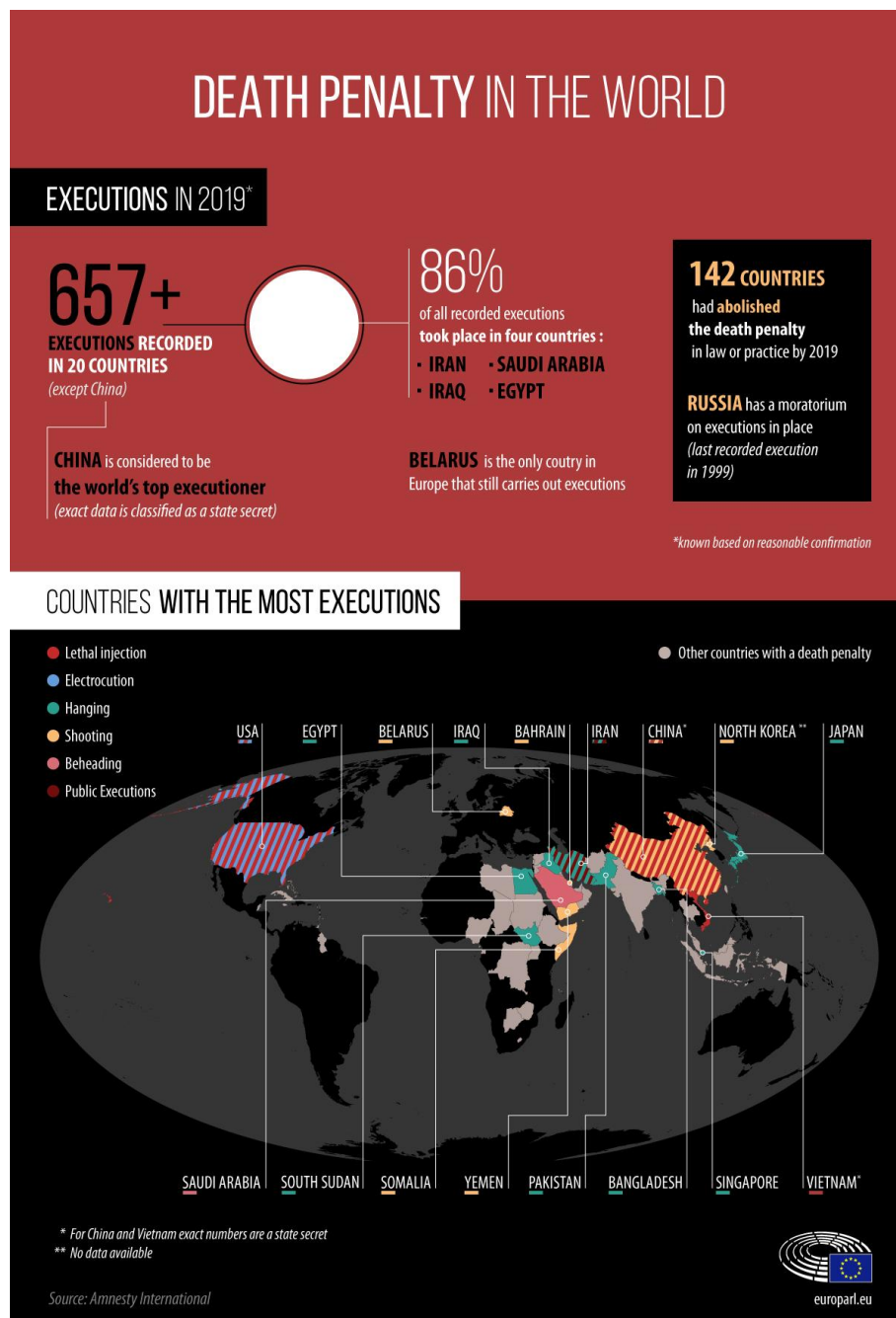

Death penalty: key facts about the situation in Europe and the rest of the world

Parliament strongly opposes capital punishment and pushes for its worldwide abolition. Find out more in our infographics.



Find out more about the death penalty across the globe in our infographic

Capital punishment: facts and figures

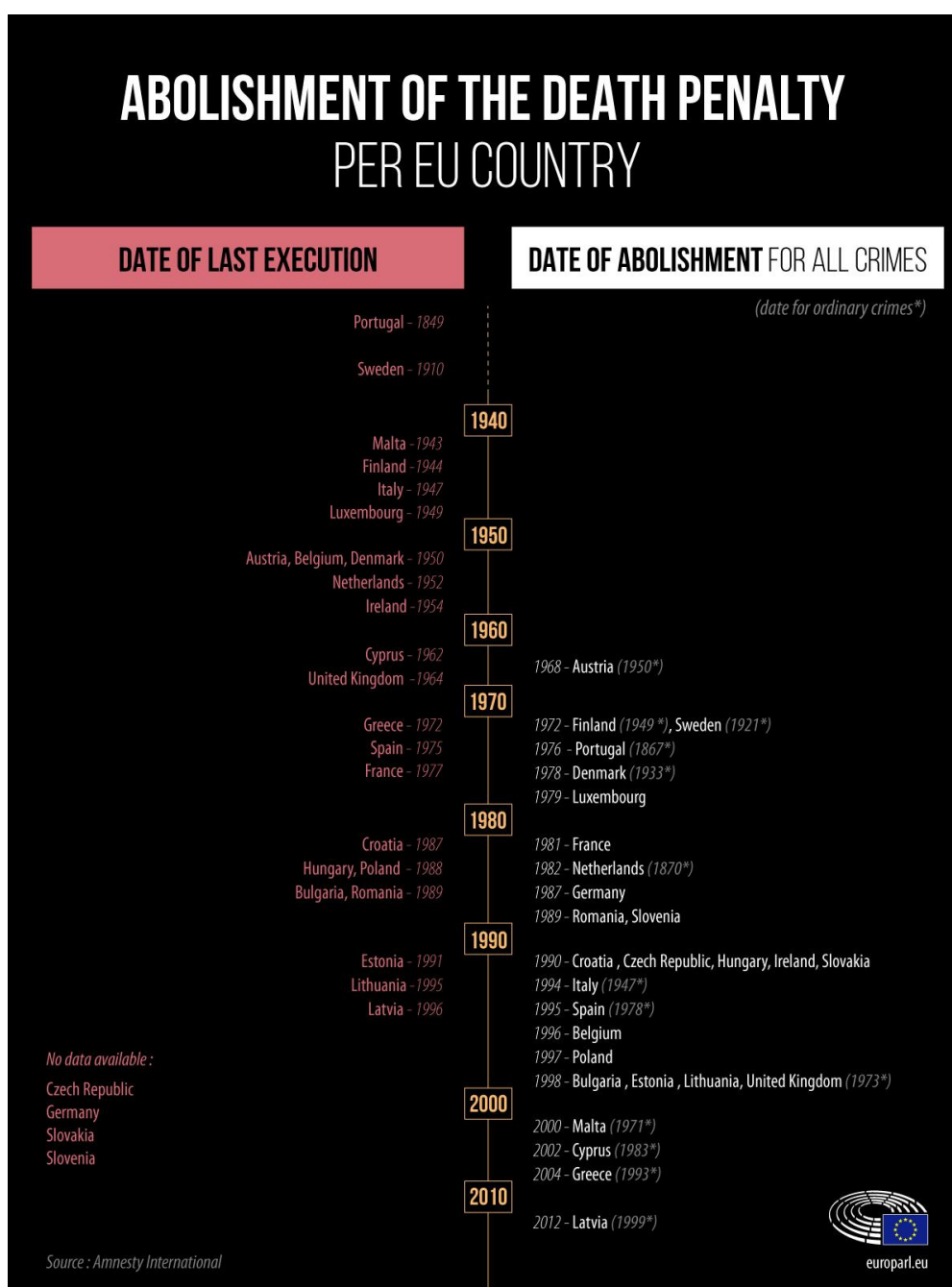
By 2019, 142 countries had abolished the death penalty in law or practice, leaving 56 countries still using capital punishment. There were 657 recorded executions in 20 countries (excluding

China, where thousands of executions are believed to have been carried out), with more than 25,000 people on death row. The number of executions in 2019 was at the lowest level in at least a decade, down from 690 in 2018 and 993 in 2017.

Some 86% of all recorded executions in 2019 took place in just four countries: Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Egypt. Figures are unknown for China, since this data is a state secret.

(Source Amnesty International)

There is strong opposition to abolishing the death penalty in Asia, the Arab World and the US. However, four fifths of the 55 African countries have abolished capital punishment or operate moratoriums.



Infographic on the abolishment of death penalty per EU country

How the EU fights the death penalty

As part of its commitment to defending [human rights](#), the EU is the largest donor in the fight against death penalty worldwide. All EU countries have abolished the death penalty in line with

the [European Convention on Human Rights](#).

The EU fights to abolish the death penalty in a number of ways:

- It prohibits trade in goods that can be used for torture and execution
- It uses trade policy to encourage compliance with human rights
- It supports civil society organisations in countries with the death penalty that raise awareness, monitor and document the situation
- As a permanent observer in the UN, it is a vocal supporter of any measures to end the death penalty

In addition the European Parliament adopts [resolutions](#) and hosts debates condemning the actions of countries that still use capital punishment. A 2015 [resolution](#) on the death penalty condemned its use to suppress opposition, or on grounds of religious belief, homosexuality or adultery.

Belarus is the only country in Europe that continues to carry out executions. There is a moratorium in Russia.

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" "Capital punishment is the most premeditated of murders" "

Albert Camus

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Briefings

[The EU's fight against the death penalty](#)

[The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its relevance for the EU](#)