



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council Nr 852
Vienna, 3rd March 2011**

EU statement on death penalty in Belarus

The EU opposes death penalty in all cases and under all circumstances and calls for a global moratorium as a first step towards its universal abolition, in line with resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007, 2008 and on 21 December 2010.

It is therefore with deep regret that the EU has learned that on 11 February 2011 the Supreme Court of Belarus upheld the death sentence imposed on Mr Ihar Myalik by the Regional Court in Mahilyov on 14 September 2010. In a statement in the Permanent Council on 23 September 2010, the EU expressed concern about the case of Mr Myalik and asked the Belarusian authorities for more information on the juridical procedures in view of the case.

The case of Mr Myalik follows the rejection by the Belarusian Supreme Court on 17 September 2010 of the appeals made by Mr Aleh Hryshkautsou and Mr Andrei Burdyka, who were sentenced to death by the Hrodna Regional Court on 14 May 2010.

The three cases are in contradiction to the stated efforts by the Belarusian authorities, the only country in Europe still applying capital punishment, to gradually restrict the death penalty.

While we are aware of the suffering of the victims of violent crime and their families, we recall that, with capital punishment, any miscarriage of justice, from which no legal system is immune, represents an irreversible loss of human life. The EU believes that the abolition of the death penalty is essential to protect human dignity and to the progressive development of human rights. The EU considers capital punishment cruel and inhuman. Furthermore, it has not been found to act as a deterrent.

We urge the authorities of Belarus to commute the death sentence against Mr Ihar Myalik, and repeat our call for granting Mr Aleh Hryshkautsou and Mr. Andrei Burdyka relief from the death penalty. The EU continues to urge Belarus to introduce a moratorium on the use of the death penalty with a view to its abolition.

The candidate countries TURKEY, CROATIA*, the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ICELAND**, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA and SERBIA, the European Free Trade Association countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

*Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

**Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and the European Economic Area.