

PC.DEL/170/11  
3 March 2011

ENGLISH  
Original: FRENCH

Delegation of Switzerland

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SWITZERLAND AT THE  
852nd MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

3 March 2011

**Regarding the death penalty in Belarus**

Mr. Chairperson,

The abolition of capital punishment is a foreign policy priority for Switzerland in the context of the protection and promotion of human rights. Switzerland opposes the use of capital punishment in all circumstances.

In the OSCE area, two countries still practise the death penalty. In Belarus, this practice is marked by secrecy.

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights pays particular attention to improving transparency in the application of capital punishment and encourages the exchange of information on this subject. The gravity of this punishment requires, moreover, that it be brought to the attention of the population so that people can discuss it with full knowledge of the facts.

Belarus has recently given signals indicating that the country was moving towards abolition and exploring the opportunity to declare a moratorium on capital punishment. We also found that some public debate was taking shape on the issue.

However, we noted that the Supreme Court of Belarus has recently confirmed the death sentence of Mr. Igor Myalik. We also learned that Mr. Grishkovets's and Mr. Burdyko's appeals for clemency were rejected by the President.

We are concerned at this news. Switzerland is worried about the fate of the condemned persons.

Mr. Chairperson,

Switzerland calls upon Belarus to declare a moratorium on capital punishment and to commute the sentences of all those condemned to death to prison terms. Lastly, Switzerland reiterates its appeal for ensuring that families are not left in the dark and that they receive all the information necessary to care for the condemned persons.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.