



EUROPEAN UNION

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EU Statement on the Death Penalty in Belarus

The Supreme Court of Belarus on 29 March confirmed the death sentence against Ivan Kulesh, which had already been handed down by the Hrodna Regional Court in November 2015.

Mr Kulesh was convicted of serious crimes and we reiterate our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the victims of these crimes.

Nevertheless, the European Union opposes capital punishment in all cases. It fails to act as a deterrent and it represents an unacceptable denial of human dignity and integrity.

We urge Belarus, the only country in Europe still applying the capital punishment, to respect the right to life of each and every one of its citizens and to join a global moratorium on the death penalty as a first step towards its abolition. Commuting the sentences of persons sentenced to death and launching a public debate on the death penalty with Belarusian society would be an important move in this regard.

We welcome the conference on the death penalty that was hosted in Minsk on 10 March and in which EU Special Representative on Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis, participated. We hope that this conference will lead to concrete results and bring Belarus a step further towards abolition.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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