



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 901 Vienna, 09 February 2012

EU statement on death sentences in Belarus

The EU is deeply concerned that Mr Dzmitry Kanavalaw and Mr Uladzislaw Kavalyow, who were sentenced to death by the Supreme Court in Belarus on 30 November 2011, do not appear to have had a right to judicial appeal. On 15 December 2011, in the Permanent Council, the EU referred to the statement by the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton, in which she expressed the hope that their right to appeal would be fully exercised.

In addition the EU is deeply worried about reports from independent human rights organisations about possible irregularities relating to the trial of Mr Kanavalaw and Mr Kavalyow.

The death sentences contradict the stated efforts by the authorities of Belarus to gradually restrict the use of death penalty in Belarus, the only country in Europe still applying capital punishment.

The European Union opposes the use of capital punishment 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 2010.

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. Furthermore, no reliable evidence supports the argument that the death penalty is a deterrent to serious crime.

We strongly urge the authorities of Belarus to commute these death sentences on Mr Kanavalaw and Mr Kavalyow immediately. The EU continues to call upon Belarus to introduce an immediate moratorium on the use of the death penalty with a view to its abolition.

The acceding country CROATIA*, the candidate countries THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, MONTENEGRO and ICELAND**, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates 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 UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ANDORRA 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 EFTA and the European Economic Area.