



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council No. 1262
Vienna, 12 March 2020**

EU Statement on the death penalty in Belarus

The EU deeply regrets that another death sentence was reported recently in Belarus. On 6 March 2020, Viktor Skrundzik was sentenced to death by the Minsk Regional Court in Belarus. This is the third death verdict this year after the two brothers Stanislau and Illia Kostseu were sentenced to death in January.

Reportedly, five people are currently held on death row in Belarus. Two of them, Viktor Paulau and Viktor Serhel, lost their appeals to the Supreme Court and are at risk of imminent execution.

The EU remains deeply worried about the secrecy and lack of transparency surrounding the use of the death penalty in Belarus, which leaves families of the convicted and the public in the dark.

The European Union reaffirms its strong opposition to the use of the death penalty at all times and in all circumstances. The death penalty violates the inalienable right to life enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. Miscarriages of justice, inevitable in any judicial system, are irreversible. Capital punishment also fails to act as a deterrent to crime.

The EU will continue its long-standing campaign against the death penalty, including within the OSCE. We call on Belarus and the United States, the two participating States that still maintain the death penalty in law and in practice, as well as on relevant OSCE Partners for Cooperation, to introduce a moratorium on executions as a first step towards full abolition.

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

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