



EUROPEAN UNION

**Permanent Council Nr 882
Vienna, 13 October 2011**

EU statement on the occasion of the European and World Day against the Death Penalty on 10 October

On the occasion of the European and World Day against the Death Penalty, the European Union would like to reiterate its firm opposition to the use of capital punishment in all cases and under all circumstances. The EU believes that the abolition of the death penalty is essential to protect human dignity and to the progressive development of human rights.

On 10 October 2011, in a joint statement, the EU High Representative, Catherine Ashton, and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Thorbjørn Jagland, stressed that: “experience in Europe has taught us that the death penalty does not prevent an increase in violent crime, and nor does it bring justice to the victims of such crimes. Any capital punishment resulting from a miscarriage of justice, from which no legal system can be immune, represents irreversible loss of human life.”

The EU welcomed the discussion on the use of death penalty during this year’s HDIM. In this context, we restate our condemnation of the use of capital punishment in Belarus. We strongly urge the Belarusian authorities to comply with their OSCE commitment to make available to the public information regarding the use of capital punishment. We are very concerned that executions

in Belarus, including the two that took place in July this year, are conducted in secret and without providing any information to the families of the executed.

The United States of America is the only other remaining country in the OSCE area carrying out executions. Throughout the year in the Permanent Council, the EU has voiced on many occasions concern regarding executions carried out in the USA.

The EU urges Belarus and the USA to introduce a moratorium as a first step towards an abolition of capital punishment, in line with resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007, 2008 and 2010.

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 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 the EFTA and the European Economic Area.