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Delegation of Belarus

**STATEMENT BY MR. DENIS SIDORENKO,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BELARUS TO THE OSCE, AT THE MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

3 March 2011

**In response to the statements by the European Union and Switzerland
regarding the death penalty in Belarus**

Mr. Chairperson,

Our delegation has listened carefully to the statements by the delegations of the European Union and Switzerland. The points raised in them will be brought to the attention of our capital.

We have outlined the position of the Republic of Belarus on the death penalty many times at meetings of the Permanent Council.

We should like to remind you that the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus provides for the temporary application of the death penalty until its abolition. This is an exceptional measure of punishment and is applied extremely rarely for particularly serious and brutal crimes.

At the same time, active work is continuing in Belarus with the aim of developing public support and creating conditions that would be conducive to the non-application in judicial practice of such a form of punishment as the death penalty and would ultimately lead to a moratorium on capital punishment or to its abolition.

To that end, in 2010 a special working group on the death penalty question was set up within the Belarusian Parliament, and the subject of a moratorium is being discussed in the media and at public information events, including those organized by the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

An active and open dialogue on this subject is under way in Belarusian society. In this connection, the question of the abolition of the death penalty is a difficult and multifaceted one, and it requires a comprehensive and balanced assessment, taking into account, among other things, the results of the 1996 referendum. In this connection, we are counting on our partners to show understanding.

As for the specific cases mentioned in the statements by the European Union and Switzerland, we should like to mention the following.

In September of last year, at an appeal hearing, the Supreme Court of the Republic of Belarus upheld the death sentences handed down to Oleg Grishkovets and Andrei Burdyko.

According to the information available to the office of the public prosecutor, no appeals for clemency addressed to the President of the Republic of Belarus regarding Oleg Grishkovets and Andrei Burdyko have been considered, and no decision on them has been taken. This being the case, we once again urge our colleagues to verify their information before expressing their “concern” at meetings of the Permanent Council.

In February of this year, at an appeal hearing, the Supreme Court of Belarus also upheld the death sentence handed down to Igor Myalik. According to the information available to us, this person has not approached the pardons commission.

We should like to draw the delegations’ attention to the fact that all three of these convicted individuals were sentenced to the maximum punishment for the brutal murders of two or more persons.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.