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Swedish Presidency of the European Union

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EU Statement on the death penalty in Belarus

The EU expresses its grave concern about a second death sentence pronounced in a short period in Belarus. This latest death sentence recently handed out by the Minsk Regional Court on July 22 against Mr. Andrey Zhuk follows the one pronounced at the end of June.

The EU continues to urge Belarus, like other countries that maintain the capital punishment, to abolish the death penalty and, as a first step, to introduce a moratorium.

The EU recalls the stated efforts of the Belarusian government during the past several years to gradually restrict and eventually abolish the death penalty.

We would also like to recall the resolution of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 23 June supporting the lifting of the suspension of Special Guest status for the Parliament of

Belarus after a moratorium on the execution of the death penalty is introduced by the Belarusian authorities.

The EU reiterates its longstanding position on the use of death penalty. We oppose the use of capital punishment in all cases and under all circumstances and have consistently called for its universal abolition. We believe that the abolition of the death penalty is essential to protect human dignity, and to the progressive development of human rights. The EU considers this punishment cruel and inhuman. It has not been found to act as a deterrent, and any miscarriage of justice – which is inevitable in any legal system – is irreversible. Consequently, the death penalty is abolished throughout the European Union.

The candidate countries TURKEY, CROATIA* and FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO and SERBIA, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, as well as UKRAINE align themselves with this statement.

*Croatia and Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.