



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council N°1086 Vienna, 21 January 2016

EU Statement on the Death Penalty in Belarus

A death sentence was recently handed down to Mr Henadz Yakavitski by the Minsk Regional Court of the Republic of Belarus. The European Union expects that Mr Henadz Yakavitski's legal right to appeal will be fully guaranteed.

Mr Yakavitski was convicted of a serious crime and we extend our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the victim. Nevertheless, the European Union opposes capital punishment in all cases and without exception. The death penalty is a cruel and inhuman punishment, which fails to act as a deterrent and represents an unacceptable denial of human dignity and integrity.

The European Union calls for a global moratorium as a first step towards the universal abolition of capital punishment, in line with resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, and we urge Belarus – the only country in Europe still applying capital punishment – to join this moratorium. Commuting the sentences of persons sentenced to death and launching a public debate on the death penalty with Belarusian society would be an important move in this regard.

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

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