



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council Nr 830 Vienna, 23 September 2010

## **EU statement on the death penalty in Belarus**

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It is with deep regret that the EU has learned that on 17 September the Supreme Court of Belarus, the only country in Europe still applying capital punishment, rejected the appeals by Mr. Aleh Hryshkautsou and Mr. Andrei Burdyka, who were sentenced to death by the Hrodna Regional Court on 14 May. The ruling comes after the execution in Belarus of two citizens in March 2010.

The EU opposes death penalty in all cases and under all circumstances and calls for a global moratorium as a first step towards its universal abolition, in line with resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 18 December 2007 and on 18 December 2008. In addition, we note that the International Day against the Death Penalty is marked on 10 October.

While we are aware of the suffering of the victims of violent crime and their families, we recall that, with capital punishment, any miscarriage of justice, from which no legal system is immune, represents an irreversible loss of human life. The EU believes that the abolition of the death penalty is essential to protect human dignity and to the progressive development of human rights. The EU considers capital punishment cruel and inhuman. Furthermore, it has not been found to act as a deterrent. While the EU fully respects the democratic process of

other countries, the concern for human integrity and human dignity, which has inspired us to abolish capital punishment, obviously applies to all human beings.

The EU has learnt with concern about another death sentence pronounced on 14 September by the Mahilyow Regional Court against Mr Ihar Myalik. The EU would like to ask the Belarusian authorities to provide further information on the judicial procedures in view of this case.

We call on the authorities of Belarus to commute the death sentences against Mr Aleh Hryshkautsou and Mr Andrei Burdyka. The EU continues to urge Belarus to introduce a moratorium on the use of the death penalty with a view to its abolition.

The candidate countries TURKEY, CROATIA\*, the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA\* and ICELAND\*\*, 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 LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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

\*\* Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and the European Economic Area.