



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council N° 1189
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EU statement on the Death Penalty

The EU reaffirms its strong and unequivocal opposition to the use of the death penalty at all times and in all circumstances. The death penalty is cruel, inhuman and degrading in nature and makes any miscarriage of justice irreversible and fatal. Furthermore, the death penalty does not act as a deterrent to crime.

The EU remains concerned about the lack of transparency surrounding the use of the death penalty in Belarus. It was recently brought to the public's attention that two new executions have taken place in secret in mid-May 2018: those of Aliaksei Mikhalenia and Viktor Liotau. Furthermore, the death sentences handed down to Vyachaslaw Sukharka and Alyaksandr Zhylnikaw were upheld by the Supreme Court of Belarus on 30 May 2018.

The continued application of the death penalty stands in contrast to Belarus' stated willingness to engage with the international community, including the European Union, on the matter and to consider the worldwide unequivocal abolition trend of the death penalty and work on a moratorium as a first step towards its abolition. As reiterated by the HR/VP Mogherini during her recent meeting with Foreign Minister of Belarus, Vladimir Makei, tangible steps taken by Belarus to respect universal human rights, including on the death penalty, are key for shaping future relations.

The EU calls for universal abolition of the death penalty. Universal abolition contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and the progressive development of human rights. As a step towards universal abolition, the EU advocates for a global moratorium on the use of the death penalty.

The EU will continue its long-standing campaign against the death penalty, including within the OSCE. We call on Belarus and the United States, the only two countries in

the OSCE where the death penalty is still applied, to introduce a moratorium on executions as a first step towards full abolition.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and SERBIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, as well as UKRAINE and ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

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