



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Permanent Council N°1090
Vienna, 18 February 2016**

EU Statement on a death sentence in Belarus

A death sentence was handed down on 16 February 2016 to Sergei Khmelevsky by a Minsk Regional Court. Mr. Khmelevsky's legal right to appeal should be fully guaranteed.

Mr. Khmelevsky was convicted of a serious crime and we extend our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the victims.

The European Union opposes the use of death penalty, a cruel punishment, which fails to act as a deterrent. We recall the conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council on Monday which condemned the application of the death penalty in Belarus and urged the Belarusian authorities to set up a moratorium as a first step towards its abolition. 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, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA 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.