



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No 1096 Vienna, 14 April 2016

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#### EU Statement on the Death Penalty in Belarus

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We regret that following last week's Permanent Council, we have to raise again the issue of the death penalty in Belarus. The Supreme Court of Belarus has confirmed the death sentence against Mr Henadz Yakavitski, which had already been handed down by the Minsk Regional Court in January 2016.

Mr Yakavitski was convicted of serious crimes and we reiterate our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the victims of these crimes.

The European Union condemns the use of capital punishment in all cases. It fails to act as a deterrent and is a cruel punishment, representing an unacceptable denial of human dignity and integrity.

The European Union urges Belarus, the only country in Europe which still applies capital punishment, to respect the right to life for each of its citizens and to join a global moratorium on the death penalty as a first step towards its full abolition.

The European Union encourages Belarus to continue its constructive engagement with Belarusian society on this matter, including through public debates such as the recent international conference on the death penalty, hosted in Minsk on 10 March.

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 ICELAND, 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.