



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 906 Vienna, 22 March 2012

EU statement on executions in Belarus

The EU strongly condemns the executions of Mr Dzmitry Kanavalaw and Mr Uladzislaw Kavalyow in Belarus.

On 15 December 2011 and on 9 February 2012 the EU expressed its concern in the Permanent Council over the irregularities relating to the trials and the lack of the right to appeal in the two cases. In this regard, the EU would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the statement by the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton, issued on 17 March in Brussels, in which she noted that the two accused were not accorded due process including the right to defend themselves.

The EU believes that the executions contradict the stated efforts by the authorities of Belarus to gradually restrict the use of death penalty in Belarus, the only country in Europe still applying capital punishment.

The European Union opposes the use of capital punishment 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 in 2007, 2008 and 2010.

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. Furthermore, no reliable evidence supports the argument that the death penalty is a deterrent to serious crime.

The EU continues to strongly urge Belarus to introduce an immediate moratorium on the use of the death penalty with a view to its abolition.

The acceding country CROATIA*, the candidate countries THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, MONTENEGRO, ICELAND** and SERBIA, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates countries ALBANIA and BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, the European Free Trade Association country LIECHTENSTEIN member of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

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

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