



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council No. 1233 Vienna, 20 May 2019

#### EU Statement on death penalty in Belarus

The EU again reaffirms its unequivocal opposition to the use of the death penalty at all times and in all circumstances.

The European Union strongly condemns the execution of Aliaksandr Zhylnikau, which was carried out in secrecy in Belarus, in June 2019; according to reports from civil society, there is a high probability that Viachaslau Sukharka, sentenced to the death penalty in the same case, was also executed.

The European Union is concerned with the continued use of the death penalty in Belarus, the only country in Europe still applying it. The continued application of the death penalty runs counter to Belarus stated intention to proceed toward the abolition of the death penalty.

The EU is deeply concerned about the lack of transparency surrounding the use of the death penalty in Belarus, which leaves families of the convicted and the public in the dark.

We also regret that despite calls by the European Union, the Belarusian Supreme Court has decided to uphold the death penalty pronounced in the case against Alyaksandr Asipovich, on 14 May. The EU calls on the Belarusian authorities to commute all death sentences, and refrain from carrying out executions.

We are aware of the suffering of the victims of violent crime and their families. However, we recall that 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 have any proven deterrent effect.

The EU will continue its long-standing campaign against the death penalty, including within the OSCE. We call on the two participating States that still maintain the death penalty in law and in practice, as well as on relevant OSCE Partners for Cooperation, to introduce a moratorium on executions as a first step towards full abolition.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, SERBIA\* and ALBANIA\*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

\* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.