STATEMENT

by the Spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the new sentence to death penalty in Belarus

The spokesperson of Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission, issued the following statement today:

"The High Representative regrets the death sentence handed down on 24 December 2013 to Aleysander Grunow by the Homyl Regional Court, after it had been annulled earlier in the year by the Belarusian Supreme Court. She hopes that his right to appeal will be fully exercised.

The High Representative is conscious of the serious nature of the crimes for which Mr Grunow has been convicted, but capital punishment can never be justified. The European Union opposes capital punishment under all circumstances. The death penalty is a cruel and inhuman punishment, which fails to act as a deterrent and represents an unacceptable denial of human dignity and integrity.

The High Representative urges Belarus, the only country in Europe still applying capital punishment, to join a global moratorium on the death penalty as a first step towards its universal abolition."

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