Statement by the Spokesperson of High Representative
Catherine Ashton on a death sentence in Belarus

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

"The High Representative regrets the death sentence recently handed down to an individual by the Mahilyow Regional Court. She hopes that his right to appeal will be fully exercised.

She is conscious of the serious nature of the crime for which this individual has been convicted. However, she does not believe that capital punishment can ever be justified. The European Union opposes capital punishment under all circumstances. The death penalty is considered to be 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."