Statement by the spokespersons of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton and Commissioner Štefan Füle on the adoption by the Human Rights Council of a resolution on human rights in Belarus

The spokespersons of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Commissioner Štefan Füle made today the following statement:

"We welcome yesterday's adoption by the Human Rights Council of a resolution on Belarus by a solid majority of the Council members. We note increasing support to this initiative and express our gratitude to all partners who worked on it with the European Union.

We also welcome the extension of the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on Belarus Mr Miklós Haraszti, who will continue to report independently and in a balanced manner and provide recommendations to the Belarusian authorities on the human rights situation in the country. We urge the Belarusian authorities to cooperate fully with him.

We deeply regret that on the week of the adoption of this resolution, which draws the attention to death penalty in the country, yet another two persons were condemned to a death sentence in Belarus. We hope that his right to appeal will be fully exercised.

We take note of the re-establishment of the parliamentary working group on the death penalty in Belarus. We urge Belarus, the only country in Europe still applying the capital punishment, to join global moratorium on death penalty as a first step towards its universal abolition.

We recall that the development of bilateral relations between the EU and Belarus is conditional on progress towards respect by Belarus for the principles of democracy, the rule of law and human rights. The EU remains willing to assist Belarus to meet its obligations in this regard."

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