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Delegation of Switzerland

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SWITZERLAND AT THE
957th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

27 June 2013

Regarding the death penalty in Belarus

Mr. Chairperson,

I am speaking on behalf of Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland.

The fifth World Congress Against the Death Penalty was held in Madrid from 12 to 15 June 2013. It met with great success and strengthened our conviction that the abolitionist movement should persevere with its efforts. Norway and Switzerland were among the co-sponsors of that Congress, together with Spain and France.

Our support for that gathering enabled us to unequivocally reaffirm our commitment to a world without capital punishment and to state loud and clear our attachment to respect for the dignity of each individual.

Support for the abolitionist movement is at the heart of our policies to promote and protect human rights.

A consensus has emerged within the European States that capital punishment has no place in a society governed by the rule of law and respect for human rights. We are extremely concerned that Belarus is still carrying out executions. While we welcome the re-establishment of the parliamentary working group on the issue, we deeply regret the two new death sentences passed while the World Congress Against the Death Penalty was actually taking place.

Every convicted person should be entitled to exercise the rights of defence. We therefore call for the right to appeal to be guaranteed and exercised in full and for the legal proceedings to be in full conformity with international law.

With respect to the new sentences, we trust that the appeals procedure will ensure respect of human rights, the execution of the new sentences will be suspended and a moratorium on the death penalty will be imposed.

Our countries are opposed to the use of capital punishment in all circumstances. Capital punishment is a cruel and inhuman punishment, regardless of the crime committed.

We ask Belarus to show compassion and invite it to take part in the dialogue.

Thank you.