

Press Release

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Belarus : Ian Micallef takes a stand for PACE President call for a moratorium on death penalty

Strasbourg, 03.07.2009 – Ian Micallef, President a.i. of the Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, today declared his support for the initiative of the President of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE), Lluís Maria de Puig, calling for a moratorium on the death penalty in Belarus, following the death sentence passed on a young man on 29 June.

As well as the PACE, the Congress recently began to discuss cooperation with Belarus, inviting Anatoly Rubinov, Vice-President of the Council for Cooperation of Local Self-Government Bodies in Belarus, to the Standing Committee meeting, which took place in Brdo (Slovenia), on 10 June.

The Congress is ready to open a constructive dialogue with Belarus. Observer status was already granted to the Council for Cooperation of Local Self-Government Bodies in Belarus (since December 2008), which operates under the authority of the Council of the Republic of the Belarus National Assembly; and the Lev Sapieha Foundation (since June 2001).

"A moratorium on the death penalty in Belarus would clearly show the will of the Belarus authorities to be a full member of the European family of democracies, accordingly to Council of Europe values", stated President Micallef. "It constitutes an essential condition for continuing our dialogue", he concluded.

The Congress has two chambers, the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions.

It brings together 318 full and 318 substitute members representing more than 200 000 European territorial communities.

President of the Congress: Yavuz Milden (Turkey, EPP/CD), President of the Chamber of Regions: Ludmila Sfirloaga (Romania, SOC),

President of the Chamber of Local Authorities: Ian Micallef (Malta, EPP/CD).

Political Groups: Socialist Group (SOC), Group of the European People's Party – Christian Democrats (EPP/CD),
Independent and Liberal Democrat Group (ILDG).