

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
26th session

**Interactive Dialogue with Mr. Miklós Haraszti, Special Rapporteur on the
situation of human rights in Belarus**

18 June 2014

Statement by the Czech Republic

Mr. President,

The Czech Republic aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union.

Mr. Haraszti,

The Czech Republic would like to thank you for your dedicated work and your latest comprehensive report presented to the Council.

The Czech Republic has been following the situation in Belarus for many years and unfortunately has to agree that the situation of human rights in Belarus has not improved. We observe, yet again, that there has not been any substantial improvement, not only in comparison with your 2013 report and the 2012 report of the High Commissioner but also in comparison with the previous report on the situation of human rights in Belarus issued by your predecessor in 2006.

We appreciate very much your efforts to gather first-hand, impartial and objective information despite the lack of cooperation by the Belarusian authorities.

The Czech Republic notes with concern the systemic and systematic violations of human rights in Belarus clearly identified in your latest report. We fully share your conclusions and would like to take this opportunity to urge the Belarusian government to recognize the Special Rapporteur mandate, cooperate fully with all UN human rights mechanisms and implement all of the recommendations put forward in your report, including:

- to immediately and unconditionally release and rehabilitate fully all political prisoners and human rights defenders;

- to repeal Article 193.1 of the Criminal Code which limits the work and the very existence of independent civil society;
- and to immediately establish a moratorium on the use of the death penalty, as a first step towards its permanent abolition.

Mr. Haraszti,

What would be your advice to Belarusian human rights activists on how to secure a wide public support to effectively pressure the Government to abolish the capital punishment?

Second, in light of the largely ritualistic local elections in Belarus earlier this year, what concrete steps should be taken to ensure that the Presidential elections in 2015 are free and fair and that the 2010 crackdown on political opposition and human rights activists is not repeated?

Finally, we would like to assure you that we strive to use bilateral meetings with Belarusian representatives to call on them to cooperate fully with the UN Special Procedures and to implement recommendations made by the High Commissioner and the ones in your reports. We hope for early cooperation by the Belarusian Authorities, which we see, together with you, as essential for achieving tangible human rights improvements in the country.

Mr. Haraszti, we would like to thank you once again and assure you of our continued support.

Thank you.