

Brussels, **21 DEC. 2018**
A(2018)5666914-6387093

Ms Ana Gomes MEP
European Parliament
Belgium

Dear Ana,

I would like to thank you for your letter of 6 November 2018 concerning the political landscape in Bahrain in the context of the recent parliamentary elections.

The EEAS has been closely following the preparations and the implementation of the municipal and parliamentary polls on 24 November and the run-off on 1 December. We have also continuously monitored the overall political and Bahrain's human rights situation from Headquarters and via the EU Delegation in Riyadh (which is also accredited to Bahrain), in close cooperation with Member States represented in Manama and I share your concerns over the continuous deterioration of the situation in Bahrain.

We have followed with concern reiterated allegations of significant numbers of disenfranchised citizens on the basis of their political affiliation, as a result of the amendment to the electoral law on 11 June 2018 barring from participation a significant number of electors linked to dissolved opposition political societies. The credibility of the elections was also undermined by the absence of the two main opposition political societies and the absence of independent monitoring of the elections respecting internationally recognised standards.

You will have noticed that I have often publicly expressed my concern on the developments in Bahrain, most recently, on 5 November, through a statement on the sentencing of Sheikh Ali Salman. Each time we have clearly reiterated EU preoccupations for an increasingly repressive approach to handling dissenting views, which fuels confrontation and polarisation in Bahrain, undermining the chances of an inclusive political debate.

The EU also regularly continues to address the human rights situation in Bahrain with the authorities in Manama. In this context, during the last informal EU-Bahrain Human Rights dialogue on 15 May 2018, the EEAS raised all the problematic issues from freedom of expression and association, to fair trial, and particularly insisted on the urgency to respect political rights of Bahraini citizens and to preserve inclusiveness and the credibility of the electoral process, which the amendment to the electoral law is jeopardising.

The EU will continue to use all means at its disposal to further address the human rights situation in Bahrain, with the aim of reinstating a path of dialogue and reconciliation, in accordance with the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Federica Mogherini', written in a cursive style.

Federica Mogherini