

**From Catherine Ashton
To the signatories of the letter of 25 January 2013:**

Mr Willy MEYER MEP
Mr Norbert NEUSER MEP
Mr Bart STAES MEP
Mr Ivo VAJGL ALDE MEP
Mr Pino ARLACCHI MEP
Mr Raúl ROMEVA MEP
Ms Gabriele ZIMMER MEP
Ms Marisa MATIAS MEP
Ms Alda SOUSA MEP
Ms Nicole KIIL-NIELSEN MEP
Ms Ana MIRANDA MEP
Mr Helmut SCHOLZ MEP
Mr Søren SØNDERGAARD MEP
Ms Jill EVANS MEP
Ms Sabine LÖSING MEP
Mr Nicolaos CHOUNTIS MEP
Mr Paul MURPHY MEP
Mr Mikael GUSTAFSSON MEP
Ms Sabine WILS MEP
Ms Cornelia ERNST MEP
Mr Rui TAVARES MEP
Ms Isabella LÖVIN MEP
Ms Asa WESTLUND MEP
Mr Jean LAMBERT MEP
Ms Ana Maria GOMES MEP
Mr Kyriacos TRIANTAPHYLIDIS MEP
Mr Takis HADJIGEORGIOU MEP
Ms Marie-Christine VERGIAT MEP
Mr Gianni VATTIMO MEP

Brussels, **20 FEB. 2013**
Ares(2013)96563-118298

To the signatories of the letter of 25 January 2013
c/o Mr Willy Meyer, MEP
European Parliament
Rue Wiertz 60
1047 Brussels

Dear Honorable Members,

Thank you for your letter of 25 January concerning the military trial against the Sahrawi prisoners of Gdeim Izik.

Human Rights are one of the core issues in the EU-Morocco political dialogue. They are regularly addressed in the meetings of the joint bodies established under the Association Agreement. In this context, the EEAS has repeatedly raised the question of the 23 prisoners in jail in Salé/Rabat since 8 November 2010, after the dismantling of the camp of Gdeim Izik.

On 16 January 2013, the EU Delegation in Rabat expressed its concern with regard to the situation of these Saharawi activists in prison in Salé (allegation of poor detention conditions, acts of torture, trial before military court).

The EU Delegation held a meeting with civil society organisations and family members of the activists just before the trial on 01 February 2013. It will follow this trial closely, and in this context intends to meet with observers of the trial in order to have a clear understanding of the running of the proceedings before taking appropriate action.

Yours sincerely,



Catherine Ashton