

Brussels, **25 JAN. 2018**
A(2017)6180209-6987342

Ms Ana Gomes MEP
European Parliament
60 rue Wiertz
1047 Brussels

Dear Colleague,

I would hereby like to thank you for your letter dated 15 December, whereby you draw our attention to the prisoners of Gdeim Izik.

As you know, the EU has been following the situation of these prisoners very closely. Since their arrest, representatives of the EU Delegation in Rabat have met regularly with the National Council for Human Rights (CNDH) to obtain information on their state of health and the conditions of detention. Representatives of the EU Delegation followed their trial closely and observed the oral hearing of the civil proceedings. On 2 November, the EU Delegation participated in an event where the CNDH presented conclusions on its observation of the trial. In addition, the EU Delegation has been in contact with representatives of the committee of families of the Gdeim Izik prisoners, whose concerns have been recently shared with the CNDH.

I would like to recall that democracy and human rights are essential components of EU external relations and of our dialogue with partner countries including Morocco. The EU is aiming at relaunching and reinforcing this dialogue. The dialogue runs in parallel with support provided through the EU financial cooperation programme to institutions and civil society to reform the justice system in Morocco, and to bring it in line with international standards and the Constitution.

On the Western Sahara, the EU remains concerned about the long duration of this conflict and about its implications for security, respect of human rights, and regional integration. We give our full support to the UN Secretary-General's efforts to achieve a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution. I had the opportunity to express and discuss this support with the new UN SG Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, Mr. Horst Köhler in person when we met in Brussels on 9 January.

Yours sincerely,



Federica Mogherini