Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the launch of National Dialogue in Bahrain

Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission, issued the following statement today:

“I welcome the resumption of National Dialogue in Bahrain yesterday following the call of King Hamad, and hope that discussions will meet the legitimate expectations of all Bahrainis.

The success of this process very much depends on constructive cooperation between the government, the opposition and all Bahraini citizens. I urge again all sides to engage in a meaningful dialogue that is as inclusive as possible and without preconditions. I call on all parties to refrain from inciting violence and to reject it unequivocally in all its forms.

I firmly believe that the dialogue between the parties is the best way to rebuild trust and to achieve genuine national reconciliation by tackling outstanding issues and socioeconomic grievances, thereby preparing the ground for sustainable reforms.

As I have already stated on several occasions, the European Union stands ready to provide support to this process, if and when requested by Bahrain.”

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