Excellency,

We are writing ahead of the meeting between Bahraini Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani and the EU scheduled for 26 January, in which a Cooperation Agreement is expected to be signed.

We are deeply concerned by the ongoing deterioration of human rights in Bahrain, following a year where as highlighted by Human Rights Watch there has been an “escalated repression” of the Bahraini government against critics.

We therefore kindly urge you to take this opportunity to hold your Bahraini counterparts accountable for their human rights commitments by raising the cases of European-Bahraini dual citizens Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja and Sheikh Mohammed Habib Al-Muqdad and urging Bahrain to restore their moratorium on the death penalty.

European-Bahraini Prisoners of Conscience
Among the most renowned political prisoners currently incarcerated in Bahrain are high-profile political opposition leaders, activists and human rights defenders convicted for their roles in the 2011 pro-democracy protest movement in the so called “Case of Leading Activists.” Among those imprisoned is Danish-Bahraini Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja and Swedish-Bahraini Sheikh Mohammed Habib Al-Muqdad, both of whom are considered prisoners of conscience as well as Hassan Mushaima, a prominent Bahraini opposition leader. All have been prosecuted and sentenced to life for their political and human rights activism, and subjected to torture, mistreatment and systemic denial of medical care.

Increased use of the death penalty
As you are aware, Bahrain abandoned its de facto moratorium on the death penalty in 2017 and has since conducted six executions, five of which were condemned as arbitrary by UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions, Agnes Callamard, in 2017 and 2019 respectively. Today, 26 death row inmates currently face imminent execution, nearly half of whom were convicted on the basis of confessions allegedly extracted under torture in cases related to political unrest.

Following the upholding of Mohamed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa’s death sentences by Bahrain’s Court of Cassation in July 2020, 56 MEPs wrote to the King of Bahrain urging for all political prisoner’s death row sentences to be pardoned or commuted, reiterating our opposition to the
death penalty and encouraging work towards establishing a moratorium on executions as a first step towards the abolition of the death penalty.

In light of these worrying developments, I kindly ask that you use your meeting to urge your Bahraini counterparts to:

- Ensure the immediate provision of adequate medical care;
- Secure the immediate release of Hassan Mushaima, dual Swedish citizen Sheikh Abduljail Al-Muqdad and dual Danish citizen Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja; and
- Urge the Bahraini authorities to impose a moratorium on the death penalty.

We hope that you treat this request with the urgency it deserves.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration and esteem,

Ms. Karen Melchior MEP
Mr. Dietmar Koster MEP
Mr. Mikulas Peska MEP
Mr. Ernest Urtasun MEP
Mr. Lopez Aguilar MEP
Ms. Marketa Gregorova MEP
Mr. Nikolaj Villumsen MEP
Mr. Kohut Lukasz MEP
Mr. Francisco Guerreiro MEP
Mr Martin Buschmann MEP
Mr Helmut Scholz MEP
Ms Özlem Demirel MEP
Mr Milan Brglez MEP
Mr Fabio Massimo Castaldo MEP
Mr Chris McManus
Mr Cyrus Engerer MEP