Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the execution of Sri Lankan migrant worker Rizana Nafeek in Saudi Arabia

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission issued the following statement yesterday:

"I am deeply dismayed by the information that Sri Lankan national Ms Rizana Nafeek was executed today in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. On numerous occasions, the EU had called for the execution to be commuted and had asked the authorities to exercise all their powers in order to grant her relief from the death penalty. Ms Rizana Nafeek was most probably a minor at the time of the crime.

I recognise the serious nature of the crime involved and express my sincere sympathy to the family of the victim. However, I do not believe that their loss has been mitigated by Ms Nafeek's death. The EU opposes the use of capital punishment in all cases and under all circumstances and calls for a global moratorium as a first step towards its universal abolition. Capital punishment represents an irreversible loss of human life."