Statement by the spokesperson of High Representative Catherine Ashton on the death sentence pronounced by the International Crimes Tribunal in Bangladesh

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

“The European Union is following closely the judicial proceedings in Bangladesh concerning the crimes committed during the war preceding the independence of Bangladesh in 1971.

From the start of the trials, the European Union has repeatedly stressed its concern about the possible application of the death penalty under the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, given its opposition on principle to capital punishment. The High Representative therefore regrets the death sentence in the in absentia case of Abul Kalam Azad issued by the International Crimes Tribunal on 21 January 2013.

The European Union is opposed to the use of capital punishment in all cases and under any circumstances. The High Representative calls on the Bangladeshi authorities to commute this sentence and to introduce a moratorium on executions as a first step towards definitive abolition of capital punishment.”