Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton
on the occasion of her visit to Bahrain for the
EU-GCC Ministerial meeting

Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, made today the following statement:

“I have been following closely the situation in Bahrain since the resurgence of unrest in February 2011. I have engaged personally with the Bahraini authorities, at the highest level, as well as with Bahraini civil society.

The EU Special Representative for Human Rights, whom I asked to visit Bahrain earlier this week, met representatives from the Government, the opposition and NGOs. He was also given the opportunity to visit prisoners detained for political activities.

I welcome the positive steps taken by the Bahraini authorities to implement the recommendations by the Bahraini Independent Commission of Inquiry, thus improving the human rights situation.

The EU will continue encouraging Bahrain to implement fully and swiftly the BICI and Universal Periodic Review recommendations and will provide all possible support for the achievement of this goal.

I call on all parties to refrain from violence and to work together towards national reconciliation. A lasting reconciliation process requires a combination of moderation and concrete confidence building steps by everyone, including the release of those arrested in the context of peaceful political activities, to overcome the deep polarisation of Bahraini society.”