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STATEMENT

by the Spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on recent political developments in Bahrain

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

"High Representative Catherine Ashton warmly welcomes the news that HRH Bahrain's Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad al-Khalifa, upon the request of HM King Hamad Bin Issa Al Khalifa, held wide ranging talks with participants in the National Consensus Dialogue in recent days, including in particular with Al-Wefaq's Secretary General Sheikh Ali Salman for the first time since the events of February 2011.

The High Representative also welcomes the positive reaction of the opposition, and looks forward to the resumption of National Consensus Dialogue.

The suspension of dialogue meetings last week had been a disappointment, and the EU had on this occasion reiterated its conviction that there is no solution to the current crisis other than a Bahraini one based on compromises and mutual trust.

The EU has consistently been advocating for inclusive national reconciliation talks since February 2011, calling on all parties to engage without preconditions.

The High Representative hopes that the consultations led by HRH Crown Prince Salman, as well as the decision to raise the level of governmental and other parties' representation in the dialogue, will pave the way for long term national reconciliation and sustainable reform in Bahrain."

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