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Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas
on behalf of the European Commission
(5.2.2025)

The EU has consistently and actively raised the case of Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, alongside other human rights defenders in Bahrain to demand their unconditional release.

In May 2021, the former EU Special Representative for Human Rights addressed a letter to the Foreign Affairs Minister of Bahrain, urging the release of Mr Al-Khawaja and other political prisoners on humanitarian grounds.

The EU has raised Mr Al-Khawaja's and other cases in its annual EU-Bahrain Human Rights Dialogues, including the eighth dialogue held in Manama on 8 December 2024. The discussions covered critical issues such as freedom of expression and association, the rule of law, fair trial rights, and the death penalty.

The EU welcomed the pardons of more than 2 500 prisoners in Bahrain in 2024. The EU encouraged Bahrain to further align its policies with international human rights law, particularly in the areas of the rule of law and civil and political rights with particular focus on freedom of expression, assembly and association.

The EU remains committed to continued high-level engagement on this matter. The EU Special Representative for Human Rights has expressed interest in visiting Bahrain, referencing an invitation extended to his predecessor. The EU will continue to call for the release of Mr Al-Khawaja and other human rights defenders in Bahrain through available diplomatic channels.