Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

Minister for the Middle East visits Bahrain for meeting of EU and Gulf states

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Minister for the Middle East, Alistair Burt, visited Bahrain on 30 June to attend the EU-Gulf Cooperation Council Foreign Ministers' meeting. During the visit he met His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and First Deputy Prime Minister, Sheikh Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa. He also met with members of the government, parliament, political societies and NGOs to discuss the political and human rights situation in Bahrain, progress on reform and UK assistance.

Speaking at the end of his visit, Mr Burt said:

I welcome closer ties between the EU and the GCC, an increasingly important partner for Europe. At the EU-GCC meeting we reiterated our joint commitment to developing even stronger economic and political ties. We also agreed that the EU and the GCC should work together across the foreign policy agenda and promote stability in the wider region, particularly in Syria.

I reaffirmed to the Crown Prince and senior ministers the UK's commitment to support Bahrain in its programme of reform. While progress has been made in some areas, more needs to be done, particularly to improve the human rights situation and on justice reform. The UK strongly believes that a stable and prosperous Bahrain is best guaranteed through the effective implementation of reform. I urge the government, political societies and community leaders to take the opportunity of the Holy month of Ramadan, a time for reflection, tolerance and forgiveness, to continue dialogue, promote trust and speak out against violence. Ramadan kareem.

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