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Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini  
(19.6.2018)

The European External Action Service (EEAS) has been persistently urging the Kazakh authorities to take sustainable measures to prevent torture and mistreatment in the penitentiary system and to follow up on the recommendations of the United Nations (UN) Universal Periodic Review of July 2016. The EU has also been funding the project 'Support to Judicial Reform in Kazakhstan'<sup>1</sup> in order to help and implement the country's judicial system reform, including the development of legal guarantees during criminal investigation, combatting impunity and improving procedures for complaints and reports of torture and ill-treatment.

The EEAS is also actively supporting the work of the UN Committee against Torture, the Committee for Prevention of Torture of the Council of Europe, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) / Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and Penal Reform International Office. Individual cases of particular concern are regularly raised by the EU in bilateral discussions, including the regular EU-Kazakhstan Human Rights Dialogue.

A representative of the EU Delegation in Astana together with diplomats from several EU Member States visited Mr. Yerimbetov in the Almaty detention centre on 6 February 2018. Penitentiary authorities were told on this occasion that they would be held accountable for ensuring that Mr. Yerimbetov receives care in accordance with the law and for protecting his rights.

On 15 March 2018, the EU Ambassador to Kazakhstan met Foreign Minister Abdrakhmanov to discuss recent developments concerning Kazakhstan's OSCE human dimension commitments. In the case of Mr Yerimbetov, the Kazakh authorities confirmed their readiness to cooperate with the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture.

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<sup>1</sup> Support to judicial reform in Kazakhstan: enhancing criminal justice through support to reform of the penal process and of the procedure for enforcing judicial acts.

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