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Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Borrell
on behalf of the European Commission
(3.6.2021)

The EU raises regularly with the Qatari authorities (e.g. during the Human Rights Dialogue) matters of concern related to workers' rights including reports related to the death of migrant workers in the country and the need to address cases of heat stress. More recently, the EU has raised these issues with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The EU understands from different sources that the figures mentioned in the media report referred to by the Honourable Member do not relate exclusively to deaths from work-related causes.

Labour reforms was the main topic of the visit by the EU Special Representative for Human Rights to Doha in February 2020 in his first visit to the Gulf region. During his visit, the EU Special Representative also met directly with foreign migrant workers involved in the construction of the FIFA World Cup venues.

The EU is cooperating with likeminded organisations, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), in supporting Qatar's efforts to reform its labour regulation, bringing it in line with international standards. Qatari progress in this domain (employers now being able to go abroad or change job without employer's permission or the adoption of the first non-discriminatory minimum wage in the Gulf region) has been welcomed publicly by the EU. Engagement in this key area also includes the exchange of European best-practices in cooperation with the ILO Office in Doha.