

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2560/00
by Elena Paciotti (PSE)
to the Council

Subject: Respect for human rights in Bahrain

The situation with regard to human rights and democracy in Bahrain is causing serious concern. Following the introduction of the law on 'State security' in 1974 and the subsequent dissolution of Parliament in 1975, there have been systematic violations of human rights and respect for minorities, consisting in arrests and imprisonment without trial and numerous cases of torture, documented by many international organisations.

The Bahraini authorities are denying international observers access to the country and refusing to provide information and explanations to UN bodies which have requested them, despite the fact that the country is a signatory to the Convention against torture.

In addition to adopting a number of resolutions on the subject, the European Parliament, via its Committee on Petitions, has taken up the case of Hassan Ali Mshaima, a Bahraini citizen and English teacher, who has been detained without any specific charges and without being brought to trial.

There are also systematic violations of social rights.

Can the Council:

- supply detailed information about respect for human rights and for minorities in Bahrain?
- say what the state of relations is between the EU and Bahrain in the context of cooperation with the Gulf States?
- say what steps the Council can take directly or in cooperation with the Member States concerned to ask the Bahraini authorities to respect human rights and cooperate, as a matter of urgency, with international humanitarian organisations, in order to ensure that they are allowed access to the country?
- say what practical steps will be taken to make the development of any form of cooperation with Bahrain subject to respect for the most basic human rights?