

## EU takes king`s side in Moroccan protests

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EUOBSERVER / BRUSSELS - The EU has endorsed reform proposals by the King of Morocco despite complaints that they will not lead to real change.

EU foreign affairs chief Catherine Ashton and neighbourhood commissioner Stefan Fuele in a joint statement on Sunday (19 June) called the King's plan "a significant step [which] signals a clear commitment to democracy and respect for human rights."

They added that "once fully implemented, it would be a major step forward in the process of reforms" and would be "in line with the ambitions [for] advanced status in the relations between Morocco and the EU."

King Mohammed VI in a TV speech on Friday unveiled a draft constitution to be put to a referendum on 1 July.

The charter says that in future the king would have to nominate a prime minister from the ranks of a freely elected political party. The PM would be in charge of setting domestic policy and would have the power to dissolve parliament. The charter promises an independent judiciary and an end to human rights abuses by security forces. It also alters the king's official title from that of a "sacred" ruler to an "inviolable" one.

Mohammed VI would stay in charge of foreign policy and of the military and would remain the country's religious head, however. He would also be able to pass royal decrees in parallel to the government.

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