



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 10.2.2023
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Dear Presidents,

The Commission would like to thank the Vlaams Parlement, acting as a component of the Belgian national parliamentary system in accordance with Declaration no. 51 annexed to the Treaties, for its Opinion in response to the killing of Mahsa Amini and the brutal repression of the ensuing peaceful demonstrations in Iran.

The death of the 22-year-old Mahsa Amini at the hands of the Iranian morality police remains the most deplorable act there is for anyone who genuinely believes in the duty of institutions to protect their citizens. The outrage this episode caused has resulted in a national protest movement that is putting in question the political, religious, and cultural foundations of the Shiite clerical regime. The disproportionate use of force by the Iranian security forces to contain and suppress the protest movement is a matter of serious concern that requires the most urgent attention. Fundamental rights such as freedom of expression and assembly must be respected in all circumstances.

The EU has used its direct and confidential channels with the Iranian authorities, up to the highest political level in Iran, to call for accountability for the death of Mahsa Amini and for restraint in the response to the ensuing peaceful protests. Both publicly and in its direct contacts with the Iranian authorities, the EU will continue to call for tangible improvements to the human rights situation in Iran.

The High Representative/Vice President Borrell Declaration of 25 September 2022 on behalf of the EU showed the strong unity of the EU and its Member States in condemning the way the Iranian security and police forces are handling the protests and in urging the Iranian authorities to abide by the principles of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a party.

Following the proposals put forward by the HR/VP at the Foreign Affairs Councils of 17 October 2022, 14 November 2022, 12 December 2022, and 23 January 2023, the Council added 78 individuals and 27 entities to the list of those subject to restrictive measures due to their role in the death of Mahsa Amini and the violent response to the ensuing

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demonstrations. The measures imposed consist of a travel ban and an asset freeze. In addition, EU citizens and companies are forbidden from making funds or economic resources available to the listed individuals and entities. The sanctions regime also includes a ban on exports of equipment that might be used for internal repression and of equipment for monitoring telecommunications to Iran.

The EU also works closely with the UN bodies and supports the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur about human rights in Iran, co-sponsors the annual Canada-led resolution on human rights in Iran, and engages with the Human Rights Council in Geneva by supporting all measures to ensure accountability for human rights violations.

As clearly expressed in the Council Conclusions of December 12, the European Union calls upon Iran to eliminate, in law and in practice, all forms of systemic discrimination against women and girls in public and private life and to take gender-responsive measures to prevent and ensure protection for women and girls against sexual and gender-based violence in all its forms¹.

The Commission looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Josep Borrell Fontelles
High Representative/Vice-President*

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

¹ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/12/12/iran-council-approves-conclusions/>