

Dr. Cornelia Ernst MEP, 60, Rue Wiertz. ASP 01 H 340 B-1047 Brüssel



Mr Josep Borrell Fontelles
High Representative of the Union
for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

5th September 2023

Dear High Representative, Dear Mr Borrell,

As reported in the New York Times on September 4, 2023, a Swedish citizen and European Union employee has been in captivity under the Iranian regime for over 500 days. This detention is one of several incidents in which European citizens have been taken into custody and used as bargaining chips. Up to this point, primarily dual nationals have been targeted. Any European citizen in Iranian captivity is one too many. However, with the arrest of a European Union employee, the Iranian regime is escalating the situation further and worsening already strained relations. This incident is outrageous and requires prompt clarification.

Furthermore, the fact that Members of the European Parliament learned about this from international media and were not informed beforehand by the Commission is both incomprehensible and unacceptable.

Given this context, we demand the clarification on the following questions:

1. How long have you been aware of the detention of the Swedish citizen?
2. For what reasons has this information not been communicated to the public until now?
3. What is known about the state of health of the individual concerned?
4. Have you or any European institution been in contact with the detained person during their detention?
5. What measures have you taken to secure the release of the Swedish citizen?
6. What measures will you take to secure the release of the Swedish citizen?

We kindly request that you respond to these questions as soon as possible and keep the EU-Iran delegation informed of any further developments.

Kind regards,

Cornelia Ernst (The Left, Chair of the Delegation for Relations with Iran)
Bart Groothuis (EPP, Vice-Chair of the Delegation for Relations with Iran)
Dietmar Köster (S&D, Member of the Delegation for Relations with Iran)
Hannah Neumann (Greens, Chair of the Delegation for relations with the Arab Peninsula)