

Strasbourg, 15 May 2000

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the debate on topical and urgent subjects of major importance pursuant to Rule 50 of the Rules of Procedure

by B. Belder and R. van Dam on behalf of the EDD Group

on the situation of the press and media in Iran

BS-440/00

The European Parliament,

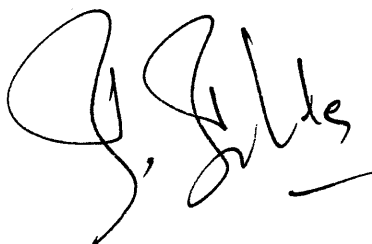
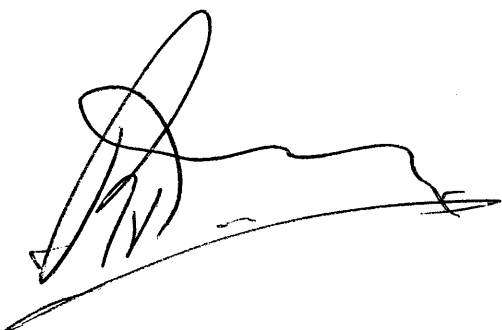
- Recalling its resolution of 16 September 1999 and 13 April 2000

- A. Whereas the independent press is playing a crucial and popular role in contemporary Iranian political life but noting the escalating harassment, intimidation and punishment of the country's independent journalists and publishers;
- B. Expressing its grave concern for the well-being of the detained Iranian writer Akbar Ganji who has been moved from the relative security of an area of Evin prison to an area of the prison under the control of the judiciary used to house serious violent criminals and drug traffickers;
- C. Whereas numerous other writers, editors and publishers have recently been summoned to appear before the Press Court or other official bodies solely in connection with their attempts to exercise their right to freedom of expression;
- D. Whereas since 1998 repression of the independent press occurred in the Islamic Republic and more than 17 Iranian newspapers have been closed over the past weeks;
- E. Dismayed by the manipulated television coverage of the Berlin conference on April 7 and 8, 2000 on the reform process in Iran and the arrest of six prominent Iranian intellectuals including Mehrangiz Kar, a women's rights advocate, Shahla Lahiji, publisher of women's books, Ali Afshari, a student leader, Essatolah Sahabi, a former minister and Hamid Reza Jalai-Pur, an editor, for participating in the mentioned conference;

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F. Whereas these six intellectuals are charged with "acting against the internal security of the state and disparaging the holy order of the Islamic Republic";

1. Strongly protests against the continuous threatening of the lives of independent journalists;
2. Asks the withdrawal of the official steps taken against these individuals whose sole offense has been to exercise their right of freedom of expression;
3. Calls for the immediate release of Mr Ganji and the other editors, publishers and journalists imprisoned for exercising their protected right to freedom of;
4. Calls on Iran to respect its international obligations as a signatory to the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, and guarantee the right to freedom of expression and association;
5. Invites the Iranian government to cease the prosecution of journalists, writers and others in revolutionary courts and the special Court of the Clergy for expression of opinions that in no way threaten public order or national security as these terms are understood in international law;
6. Encourages the Iranian government to adopt appropriate legislation and regulations with regard to freedom of expression that conform with international standards;
7. Asks the Council, the Member States and the Commission to take due account of the outcome of this situation when considering the establishment of more normal and mutually productive relations with Iran, based on the respect of the principles of the freedom of speech, freedom of expression and on the respect for fundamental human rights;
8. Instructs the President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, the government and the authorities in Iran and the Secretary General of the United Nations.



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