

**Question for written answer E-002614/2023
to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs
and Security Policy**

Rule 138

Tom Vandenkendelaere (PPE)

Subject: Iran – EEAS official taken hostage

According to various sources, a European External Action Service (EEAS) official was arrested in Iran on espionage charges in April 2022 during a tourist stay. I am unaware of any statement on this matter from the EEAS to the Foreign Affairs Council or to the European Parliament – let alone any public statement. The case is all the more disturbing because Iran is systematically taking EU citizens hostage and using hostage-taking as a tool of malign hostage diplomacy.

1. What have the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) and his services done since the person concerned was arrested to have him freed and secure his rights, safety and health?
2. What is being done or can be done by the VP/HR and his services at EU level and in coordination with Member States to put an end to or at least effectively combat the systematic taking of EU citizens as hostages and the use thereof as a tool of hostage diplomacy?
3. Does the VP/HR think that this issue should be placed on the Foreign Affairs Council's agenda in order to stimulate debate within the EU with a view to more decisive EU action to combat Iran's hostage-taking practices?

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