

**Question for written answer E-001094/2024
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Bart Groothuis (Renew), **Malik Azmani** (Renew), **Nathalie Loiseau** (Renew), **Olivier Chastel** (Renew), **Dragoş Tudorache** (Renew), **Ulrike Müller** (Renew), **Jan Huitema** (Renew), **David Lega** (PPE), **Assita Kanko** (ECR), **Henk Jan Ormel** (PPE), **Thijs Reuten** (S&D), **Caroline Nagtegaal** (Renew), **Cornelia Ernst** (The Left), **Geert Bourgeois** (ECR), **Catharina Rinzema** (Renew), **Bert-Jan Ruissen** (ECR), **Urmaz Paet** (Renew), **Matjaž Nemec** (S&D), **Rasa Juknevičienė** (PPE), **Fabio Massimo Castaldo** (Renew), **Javier Nart** (Renew), **Miriam Lexmann** (PPE), **Francisco Guerreiro** (Verts/ALE), **Javier Zarzalejos** (PPE), **Jozef Mihál** (Renew), **José Ramón Bauzá Díaz** (Renew), **Anna Fotyga** (ECR), **Theresa Bielowski** (S&D), **Alin Mituța** (Renew), **Jan-Christoph Oetjen** (Renew), **Svenja Hahn** (Renew), **Andrey Kovatchev** (PPE), **Eugenia Rodríguez Palop** (The Left), **Frédérique Ries** (Renew), **Dietmar Köster** (S&D)

Subject: Clarification on lifting sanctions against Iranian tech company ArvanCloud

It has been reported¹ that Iran's censoring tech firm, ArvanCloud, has been removed from the EU sanction list, although no details of the reasoning behind this decision have been given in the official journal². The company was sanctioned because of its close ties to the Iranian government and its key role in aiding internet censorship and providing infrastructure for the regime's surveillance activities including the country's restrictive intranet known as the National Information Network (NIN).

We support the EU's sanctions against companies that undermine internet freedom and advance digital authoritarianism in Iran. We are therefore concerned to hear that the Commission has lifted those sanctions without justification. We call upon the Commission to clarify its decision and answer the following questions:

1. Can the Commission explain why it has removed ArvanCloud from the EU sanction list, and publish the evidence that justifies this decision in the official journal?
2. Has this decision been coordinated with international partners, such as the United States, that have similar sanctions in place against ArvanCloud?
3. Will the Commission invest in or support programmes and organisations that offer free and accessible VPNs or other circumvention tools tailored to the Iranian context, in line with an in coordination with the United States or others who already offer similar programmes³⁴?

Submitted: 12.4.2024

¹ <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202404051391>.

² https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=OJ:L_202401019&qid=1712315264593.

³ <https://www.ft.com/barrier/corporate/07b2e006-1b14-4dfb-945b-38aaffb9a63f>.

⁴ <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0974>.