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Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Borrell  
on behalf of the European Commission  
(8.1.2021)

The High Representative/Vice-President (HR/VP) is deeply concerned about the human rights situation in Iran. These serious concerns extend *inter alia* to : the continued lack of respect for the freedom of expression and the freedom of assembly; Iran's treatment of detained individuals and their ability to have prompt access to counsel and medical treatment; and Iran's ongoing use of capital punishment in violation of international law. Specifically, the HR/VP clearly condemned the execution and the clear lack of respect for Mr. Afkari's due process rights during a speech on Iran to the European Parliament on 7 October 2020<sup>1</sup>, and the HR/VP's spokesperson had issued a statement on Ms. Sotoudeh's conviction on 9 March 2019<sup>2</sup>.

As part of the Union's commitment to address all issues of concern, the European Union (EU) has repeatedly urged the Iranian authorities to respect fundamental human rights in accordance with international human rights law and standards. Iran must ensure that detained individuals are kept in safe and hygienic conditions, and that as many prisoners as possible are released on medical furlough, given the ongoing COVID-19 situation in the country. The HR/VP has also reiterated his call for the release of all political prisoners as well as those peaceful demonstrators detained following the November 2019 protests in Iran.

The EU regularly raises the overall human rights situation with Iran as part of bilateral contacts at all levels. This includes raising concern about individual cases – in particular cases of individuals who are at risk of being executed. Since April 2011, the EU has also adopted restrictive measures, including asset freezes and travel bans, for individuals and entities responsible for serious human rights violations and a ban on exports to Iran of equipment that can be used for internal repression and of equipment for monitoring telecommunications<sup>3</sup>. The Council is regularly reviewing these restrictive measures in light of developments in Iran.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/iran/86497/iran-remarks-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-ep-plenary-debate-situation-iran\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/iran/86497/iran-remarks-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-ep-plenary-debate-situation-iran_en)

<sup>2</sup> [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/iran/59465/statement-spokesperson-conviction-iranian-human-rights-lawyer-nasrin-sotoudeh\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/iran/59465/statement-spokesperson-conviction-iranian-human-rights-lawyer-nasrin-sotoudeh_en)

<sup>3</sup> Council Decision 2011/235/CFSP of 12 April 2011 concerning restrictive measures directed against certain persons and entities in view of the situation in Iran (OJ L 100 14.4.2011, p. 51); and Council Regulation (EU) No 359/2011 of 12 April 2011 concerning restrictive measures directed against certain persons, entities and bodies in view of the situation in Iran (OJ L 100 14.4.2011, p. 1).