

Priority question for written answer P-003332/2021
to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Rule 138
Gianna Gancia (ID)

Subject: The election of the Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and the EU-Iran relationship

On 18 June 2021, despite an unprecedented boycott of the elections, Ebrahim Raisi, a man trusted by the Ayatollah Khamenei, was elected President of Iran.

Following 40 years of involvement in gross human rights abuses, including his direct role in the 1988 massacre of 30 000 political prisoners in Iran, Amnesty International affirmed that 'Ebrahim Raisi must be investigated for crimes against humanity'. Raisi was also hit by US sanctions as long ago as 2019 in the light of arrests of protesters, the torture of detainees and the killing of 1 500 peaceful demonstrators in protests that took place in November that year.

1. Given that the protection of human rights is a guiding principle of the EU's external action under Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union, it is striking that Raisi has not been the subject of EU sanctions. Why has the EU adopted this stance? Does the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) expect the EU's approach to change in the near future?
2. In seeking to balance the need to maintain relations with an interlocutor such as Iran and the EU's essential duty to protect rights, does the VP/HR not think that the EU should give priority to the latter and place it at the basis of its relations with Iran?