

Priority question for written answer P-003554/2022

to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Rule 138

Susanna Ceccardi (ID)

Subject: The case of Italian national Andrea Costantino: need for the Commission to seek his return to Italy

On 30 May 2022, Italian citizen Andrea Costantino was released from Al Wathba prison in Abu Dhabi, where he had been held since 21 March 2021 on charges of collaborating with a terrorist organisation.

He was allowed only limited communication with his family and his conditions of detention were extremely poor, causing him to lose 30 kg, as confirmed by Nicola Lener, the Italian ambassador to Abu Dhabi, who met him in prison last May¹.

On 8 June, he was ordered by the Abu Dhabi court where his case was being heard to pay a fine of EUR 500 000 as a condition for being allowed to leave the country.

In the meantime, the European Union has been seeking dialogue with the United Arab Emirates with a view to addressing matters such as arbitrary imprisonment and the right to a fair trial, as reflected in the tenth EU-UAE dialogue of 9 June 2021.

In view of this:

1. Can the VP/HR say whether he was aware of the case of Andrea Costantino and give his opinion on the matter?
2. Was he able to express his views on the matter in the course of his visit to the United Arab Emirates in the first few days of October 2021² for discussions regarding progress made by that country in upholding civil rights?

Submitted: 29.10.2022

¹ https://www.corriere.it/cronache/22_luglio_20/abu-dhabi-scarcerato-costantino-75bb8da2-084d-11ed-bd15-abd29857fc36.shtml

² https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/uae-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-held-talks-abu-dhabi-and-dubai_en