

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH IRAN
– THE CHAIR –

H.E. Ambassador Ali-Asghar Khaji
Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran
415 Avenue des Tervuren
B-1150 Brussels

Your Excellency,

Our delegation has been informed yesterday that Morteza Samiari, a recently arrested student leader and member of the *Student Union to Foster Unity* (Daftar e Tahkim Vahdat), was confronted in his indictment with the accusation to have prepared for a meeting with the EU Parliament. This information, if confirmed, is for us a matter of extremely serious concern for several reasons.

Mr. Samiari reportedly found himself confronted with the allegation that it was *his* initiative to establish contacts with the European Parliament delegation. This would mean turning the truth upside down. It was rather our secretariat who established contacts with a broad range of civil society actors in the framework of our delegation visit in January, which was later postponed, as your Excellency informed me on 3 January. If the Iranian judiciary starts to consider Iranian citizens' contacts with the European Parliament delegation a criminal offense, the very basis of our relations is at stake.

This event poses - at best - some serious problems for the future approach to our work. Any contact to Iranian citizens inside Iran is put into question. Your embassy is well informed that the European Parliament delegation to Iran when visiting your country always tries to meet a broad range of personalities and organisations from all strands of society. As your embassy can confirm, because there was never any secrecy about this, in the two prior European Parliament visits to Iran, the delegation secretariat set up an additional program with our own contacts alongside the official agenda. This is normal practice not only for the Iran delegation, but for European Parliament delegations to most countries in the world. It is born out of the genuine desire to gain a more in depth impression of the country and its people beyond the legislative and governmental level.

Your Excellency will understand that we feel very concerned about Mr. Samiari's situation and the links which the accusation has allegedly fabricated between him and our visit to Tehran. We urgently call for Mr. Samiari's immediate release and request an official clarification as to the exact nature of the reproach against Mr. Samiari.

Despite this event, I look forward to our meeting planned for the 22 February in the hope that we will be able to find common ground on which to continue a fruitful relationship between the European Parliament and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barbara Lochbihler', with a stylized, cursive script.

Barbara Lochbihler