Resolution on the human rights situation in Iran, particularly mass executions and the recent death of the blogger Sattar Beheshti

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution the human rights situation in Iran, particularly mass executions and the recent death of the blogger Sattar Beheshti.

The resolution was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ALDE, Greens/EFA, ECR, EFD, and GUE/NGL groups.

It expressed grave concern over the **steadily deteriorating human rights situation in Iran**, the growing number of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, the continuously high number of executions, including of juveniles, the widespread torture, unfair trials and exorbitant sums demanded for bail, and the heavy restrictions on freedom of information, expression, assembly, religion, education and movement. It is also deeply concerned about the death in prison of Sattar Beheshti, who criticised the Iranian regime on the internet, and was arrested on 30 October 2012 by the specialised cyber police unit – known as Fata – for alleged cyber crimes. Members note that the exact circumstances of his death are not yet established, several reports indicating that he died as a result of torture in an Iranian detention facility, and they urge the Iranian authorities to conduct a thorough enquiry into the case.

Parliament goes on to note a **dramatic increase in executions**, with over 300 executions registered since the beginning of 2012, and strongly condemns the use of the death penalty in Iran and calls on the Iranian authorities to institute a moratorium on executions pending the abolition of the death penalty, in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolutions 62/149 and 63/168. The Iranian Government is urged to prohibit the execution of juveniles and to consider commuting all capital sentences for juveniles currently facing a death sentence.

Parliament calls on the Commission, in close cooperation with Parliament, to **make effective use of the new Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights** in order to support democracy and respect for human rights in Iran, including freedom of expression online. With regard to the latter, it notes the Iranian authorities continue their efforts to build a ‘halal internet’, effectively denying Iranians access to the World Wide Web, and to use information and communication technologies to crack down on fundamental freedoms.

Members want EU Representatives and the VP/HR to **encourage the Iranian authorities to re-engage in a human rights dialogue** and they reaffirm their readiness to engage in a human rights dialogue with Iran at all levels on the basis of the universal values enshrined in the UN Charter and in international conventions.

Whilst supporting the EU’s dual-track approach to Iran (combining sanctions with diplomacy) Members are also **concerned about the negative effects of wide-reaching sanctions against Iran on the Iranian people**, including a rise in inflation and a shortage of necessary items, in particular medicine. They call on the Council to **reinforce targeted measures against Iranian individuals and entities,** including state institutions, which are responsible for or involved in grave human rights violations and restrictions of fundamental freedoms, particularly through the misuse of ICTs, the internet and media censorship. All assets in the EU, including real estate, belonging to Iranians targeted by the restrictive measures must be seized and frozen.

Parliament urges the Iranian authorities to release all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, including **Sakharov Prize winners** Nasrin Sotoudeh and Jafar Panahi, and allow them to come to the European Parliament in December 2012 to collect their prizes. It expresses its concern about the deteriorating health condition of the lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh who has embarked on a hunger strike after being refused family visits.

The resolution calls on the Iranian authorities to:

- guarantee a stringent respect of fair trial and due process to all detainees, as stipulated in the ICCPR;

- accept peaceful protest and to address the numerous problems facing the Iranian people, and guarantee religious freedom in accordance with the Iranian constitution and the ICCPR;

- demonstrate that they are fully committed to cooperating with the international community in improving the human rights situation in Iran. The Iranian Government is urged to fulfil all its obligations, both under international law and under the international conventions it has signed.

Lastly, Parliament calls on Iran to honour its stated intention to allow a visit during 2012 by the **UN Special Rapporteur** for Human Rights in Iran, Dr Ahmed Shaheed, noting with concern that Iran has not accepted any visits by UN special rapporteurs or by the High Commissioner for Human Rights since 2005.