



## STATEMENT REGARDING THE RECENT SENTENCING OF IRANIAN HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER

The ECBA Human Rights Committee would like to join other international voices and issue a statement expressing the concern over the recent sentencing of Nasrin Sotoudeh, a prominent human rights lawyer in Iran.

According to reports, Nasrin Sotoudeh was sentenced to the exhausting term of 33 years in prison – and, horrifically, 148 lashes for allegedly spreading information against the state, insulting Iran’s supreme leader, and spying.

Nasrin Sotoudeh is the winner of the 2012 European Parliament Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought. She is a human rights lawyer well known for defending several women who were prosecuted for peacefully protesting against the compulsory wearing of the veil in Iran. Throughout the course of her career, she has also defended cases of political interest, helping people such as prisoners of conscience, human rights activists, and minors facing the death penalty.

The ECBA is deeply concerned about the increasing pressure on lawyers in Iran – and rightfully so. Cases involving politically sensitive matters, such as women’s rights, or cases related to national security, are becoming increasingly fraught with trouble, and even danger.

Attention must be drawn to the fact that according to the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, in particular Principles 16 and 18 on Guarantees for the Functioning of Lawyers, it is stated that:

*Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; (b) are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely both within their own country and abroad; and (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics. Lawyers shall not be identified with their clients or their clients' causes as a result of discharging their functions.*

In view of the above, the ECBA Human Rights Committee urges the Iranian authorities to overturn Sotoudeh’s sentencing, and restore her freedom as soon as possible, since her conviction is solely based on her professional activity as a lawyer.

It is also essential that the government now undertake all necessary measures to guarantee that, going forward, all lawyers in Iran are able to carry out their professional duties without fear of reprisal, hindrance, intimidation or harassment, in order to preserve the independence and integrity of the administration of justice and the rule of law.