

## EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



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Brussels,  
A(2012)595655 - 722131

Dear Petitioner,

The European Union is very concerned by and closely follows developments in the ever deteriorating human rights situation in Iran. The number of executions for 2012 alarmingly amounts to 137, which sadly confirms Iran as one of the world's leading users of the death penalty.

Thousands of individuals remain at risk of execution, even for acts which are not considered as among the most serious crimes according to international minimum standards. Among the most disturbing reports are those of four men sentenced to hanging for “sodomy”. It is indeed a difficult case both because of the location – a rather remote mountainous province – as well as the fact that the condemned belong to an ethnic minority (Luri).

The EU closely monitors their situation and uses all available actions – from public statements to diplomatic demarches - to put pressure on the Iranian authorities. In this context, only recently my Spokesperson issued a statement expressing concern at the continued increase of executions and calling on Iran to commute all death sentences, halt pending executions and introduce a moratorium on the death penalty. The situation in Iran is all the more disturbing as the death penalty is often handed down in cases which do not fall within the scope of the “most serious crimes” as described in the relevant international minimum legal standards.

The EU will continue to use all available means to persuade the Iranians to abide by the international obligations on the right to life and human dignity. The EU has decided on a targeted set of measures and 78 individuals are on the European Union sanctions list for human rights violations in Iran.

Link:

Statement by the Spokesperson of High Representative Catherine Ashton on the use of the death penalty in Iran

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/130518.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/130518.pdf)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Catherine Ashton', with a horizontal line underneath.