



Bahá'í International Community

Brussels Office

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Ms. Elżbieta Bieńkowska
European Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

Brussels, 12th April 2016

Dear Commissioner,

As you are preparing to accompany the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, Mrs. Federica Mogherini, on her visit to Iran, the Bahá'í International Community would like to draw your attention to the situation of the Bahá'ís in that country and more specifically to the denial of their right to work.

Since the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979, members of the Bahá'í Faith – the largest non Muslim religious minority in the country – have been subject of a state sponsored campaign of general economic oppression.

The report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran to the 31st session of the Human Rights Council (March 2016) states that “In addition to arbitrary arrests, detentions and prosecutions of Bahá'ís, the Special Rapporteur continues to receive troubling reports that Iranian authorities continue to pursue activities that economically deprive Bahá'ís of their right to work, reportedly in line with a 1991 directive issued by the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution. These policies include restrictions on types of businesses and jobs Bahá'í citizens can have, closing down Bahá'í-owned businesses, pressure on business owners to dismiss Bahá'í employees, and seizures of businesses and property.”

We are confident that you share the view that no society can hope to thrive if large sections of its population are relegated to the lowest ranks of economy and prevented from contributing to its prosperity and growth.

We therefore very much hope that during your visit, you will find ways to address the question of the right to work for all, including for the Bahá'ís, in such a way that Iran's authorities will be encouraged to take concrete and palpable measures to remedy the situation.

Sincerely yours,

Rachel Bayani
Representative
Bahá'í International Community - Brussels office

Enclosed:

- Letter to High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, Mrs. Federica Mogherini
- Overview of the persecutions of the Bahá'ís in Iran
- Report prepared by the Bahá'í International Community entitled: "Their Progress and Development are Blocked: The economic oppression of Iran's Bahá'ís".