



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU concerning the consideration of a draft Penal code in Iran

The European Union is deeply concerned by the on-going deterioration in the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The EU expresses its acute concern about the news that the Iranian Parliament is reviewing a draft Penal code. The EU is concerned, in particular, about Section Five on Apostasy, Heresy and Witchcraft.

It is important to note that, if the law is adopted, it will be for the first time that the Islamic Republic of Iran had in its criminal code, as a legal stipulation, the death penalty for apostasy. In the past, the death penalty has been handed down and carried out in apostasy cases, but it has never before been set down in law. Furthermore, grave concern is also expressed over the articles concerning heresy and witchcraft, which determine death penalty as the punishment for acts that are contrary to the obligations and necessities of Islam.

These articles clearly violate the Islamic Republic of Iran's commitments under the international human rights conventions, to which Iran is party.

P R E S S

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The EU calls upon the Iranian authorities, both in Government and Parliament, to modify the draft Penal code in order to respect the obligations under the international human rights conventions to which the Islamic Republic of Iran is a party. In its current state, the draft Penal code is not consistent with the Islamic Republic of Iran's obligations and therefore should not enter into force as currently drafted.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and the EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.