

The President

Ms Ursula von der Leyen
President
European Commission

13.01.2026

Dear President, *Dear Ursula,*

The recent protests in Iran, the largest since the death in police custody of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in 2022, represents a powerful and unmistakable demand for change from Iranian society. It is a courageous call for freedom and respect for fundamental human rights.

For too long, Iranians have suffered under an oppressive and brutal regime that seeks to silence dissent through systematic repression and executions. Human rights organisations report that the violent crackdown by Iranian authorities has claimed hundreds of lives, and has led to over 10,000 arrests in the past two weeks alone.

The European Parliament has consistently and unequivocally condemned the Iranian regime's oppression and violence against its own people, including the use of executions, the upholding of death sentences following unfair trials, inhumane detention conditions, and the systematic targeting of political activists and religious communities.

The European Parliament has also repeatedly called, since January 2023, for the designation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organisation, in light of its role in Iran's systematic repression, the violent crackdown on protests, grave human rights violations, the taking of EU citizens as hostages, and the targeting of individuals on European soil.

In line with these positions, and in response to the gravity of the current situation, on 12 January 2026, I decided to prohibit staff of Iranian diplomatic missions and other officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran from accessing the European Parliament's premises. This decision reflects the European Parliament's determination not to offer any platform that could serve to legitimise a regime using repression as a tool for self-preservation.

Against this background, I believe it is essential that the European Union demonstrates a coherent and united institutional response. In this regard, I would welcome the Commission's engagement, in close coordination with the High Representative and the Council, in advancing a strengthened and comprehensive sanctions response, with a view to ensuring accountability and maintaining sustained political and diplomatic pressure on those within the Iranian regime responsible for repression and violence.

Continued efforts to explore all available avenues for strengthening EU sanctions would be particularly important, including the designation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organisation; the expansion of targeted personal sanctions against regime officials responsible for repression and human rights violations; tighter controls on the export of technologies that could be used for surveillance or internal repression; and engagement with telecommunications companies to assess what, if anything, can be done for connectivity solutions for the Iranian people. It is equally important to step up the effective enforcement of existing restrictive measures and to consider, where appropriate, broader trade-related sanctions in order to maximise pressure on the regime.

As long as the Iranian people are denied their fundamental freedoms through systematic and brutal force, there can be no return to business as usual with those responsible. A coordinated and principled response across the EU institutions remains essential to uphold the Union's credibility and its commitment to the protection of human rights.

Yours sincerely,



Roberta Metsola