



EUROPEAN UNION

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**Statement by the spokesperson of
EU High Representative Catherine Ashton
on IRAN Filmmaker**

The spokesperson of Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission, issued the following statement today:

"High Representative Catherine Ashton was disturbed to hear about the 6 year prison sentence given to the prominent Iranian filmmaker Jafar Panahi at the end of December 2010. The sentence was accompanied by a 20 year ban on making films, giving interviews and travelling abroad. This additional punishment will prevent Mr. Panahi from exercising his fundamental right to freedom of expression, which is enshrined in Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a party.

The High Representative hopes the sentence will be repealed at the upcoming appeal proceedings. She also looks forward to hearing positive news about Mr. Panahi's colleague, the young filmmaker Mr. Mohammed Rasoulof, who received the same sentences as Mr. Panahi.

Arrests and sentences like these are not compatible with the human rights commitments that Iran herself has subscribed to in several international conventions. The EU calls on Iran to live up to those international obligations, including the right to freedom of expression through art and writing.

This case is all the sadder given the high international reputation of the Iranian film industry and Iranian filmmakers."

P R E S S

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