



# PRESS -RELEASE

Jo Leinen - Angelika Beer

Brussels, 19 March 2007

## **EU must act against human rights abuses in Iran - demand Members of the European Parliament**

Today, members of the European Parliament across the political spectrum asked the German Presidency to increase the pressure on the Iranian government in order to protect religious minorities and restore the respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms in Iran

The suffering of minorities in Iran is increasing ever since president Ahmadinejad came into office. The Baha'i have been the target for religious suppression in Iran for a long time. Since the new Iranian government came into power, the persecution gets more and more unbearable.

Baha'i property is dispossessed, business connexions with Baha'i affiliates prohibited, shops and stores closed, private bank accounts frozen, members of the Baha'i community are tortured and murdered and thus the Baha'i's existential basis destroyed.

Highly alarming is a letter from 29 October 2005 by the Military High Command to all governmental agencies demanding that all members of the Baha'i community be systematically identified and observed. These developments point towards the preparation of a new wave of harassment and oppression, fear the Members of the European Parliament.

"This deprivation of civil liberties and repeated killings of members of all religious and ethnic communities must stop" stated Angelika Beer, Chairwoman of the Standing EP Delegation with Iran. The MEPs Jo Leinen (SPE), Frédérique Ries (ALDE), Bernat Joan i Mari (Greens/EFA), Erik Meijer (GUE/NGL) put forward a Written Declaration requesting the EU institutions to use their means and powers to put an end to prosecution, torture and murder of Baha'is in Iran.