

JOSEP BORRELL FONTELLES

HIGH REPRESENTATIVE
VICE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 21/09/2023
A(2023)6119265 – 9601910

Mr Michael Thaidigsmann
Executive Director
EU WATCH

Mr Nizar Zakka
President
Hostage Aid Worldwide

Dear Mr Thaidigsmann, dear Mr Zakka,

Johan Floderus, a Swedish citizen who works for the European Union, has been detained illegally in Iran for more than 500 days.

On 4 September, his family decided to publicly confirm his illegal and arbitrary detention. I fully respect their decision and have subsequently also confirmed his identity on behalf of the EU institutions, as did the Swedish authorities.

I want to stress that I have personally, together with a team of colleagues in the European Institutions, worked on the case of Mr Floderus from the very beginning in close coordination with the Swedish authorities, who have primary responsibility when it comes to the consular protection. We have also been in close contact with the family.

In every diplomatic meeting, mission and phone call and at the highest level the EU message was clear: release Johan Floderus and all illegally detained EU citizens, including dual nationals. This terrible practice needs to stop. We all want to see Johan and other EU citizens unjustly detained in Iran reunited with their families.

Regarding the wider issue of arbitrary detention of EU citizens, including dual nationals, the EU and Member States discuss these cases discretely and closely coordinate their public statements on them. However, each consular case is different. Consular affairs are primarily a prerogative of Member States, and it is, first and foremost, their to decision how to best approach each case, including whether and to request the EU's and other Member States' involvement. In the case of Johan Floderus, the EU has a special duty of care, which we take very seriously. Nonetheless, given the sensitive nature of these cases, I will continue to respect Member States' assessment and provide all the support needed.

Regarding the use of sanctions, the EU has not shied away from using this tool in response to Iran's behaviour. We will continue to consider all options at our disposal.

We remain actively engaged until Mr Floderus and all EU citizens are free.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping, fluid strokes that form a stylized, somewhat abstract representation of the name Josep Borrell Fontelles.

Josep Borrell Fontelles