



OPEN DIALOG

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9 March 2015, Brussels

Mr Martin Schulz
President of the European Parliament
Brussels

Dear Mr President,

I am addressing you on behalf of the Open Dialog Foundation in order to draw your attention to the important issue of misuse of the INTERPOL system and structures by non-democratic states, as well as its implications for the safety of individuals residing in the EU and risking extraditions to the persecuting regimes. The Open Dialog Foundation has long been denouncing cases of individuals that suffer politically motivated persecution from autocratic regimes, while seeking help and safety in the EU Member States.

It is my pleasure to be able to furnish you with a copy of the Foundation's most recent report on the above-mentioned issue, entitled: *The INTERPOL system is in need of reform*. The report lists of over 44 high-profile political cases originated in the Eastern Europe, Latin America, Northern Africa, Middle East, Southeast Asia, Australia and Oceania and the Balkans. It points to the systemic weaknesses of the current INTERPOL system but also provides very concrete conclusions and recommendations on how to improve it.

The role of the Member States, as well as international organizations and institutions in keeping the discussion on the issue high on the agenda is essential. Mounting international interest is needed in order to engage in a multilateral dialogue with the INTERPOL authorities and jointly look for a holistic solution. In this regard, the European Parliament can be of particular importance. A number of aspects central to the problem are highly pertinent to the work of many EP committees, which discuss issues related to human rights, home and foreign affairs, justice and refugees' rights. We believe that a joint hearing or discussion within these committees on the above-mentioned issue would help in raising general awareness both on an international level but also, possibly, within the EU Member States.



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With the present letter, we would like to kindly ask you to address the issues directly with the INTERPOL authorities, as well as with the EU Member States, which should be further sensitized on the risks that politically motivated INTERPOL “Red Notices” and other misused instruments can bring about. Both the EU citizens, as well as individuals coming from third countries, seeking in the EU protection from politically motivated and, often ruthless, persecution are affected, their lives often being put at risk.

So far, the issue of misuse of INTERPOL and the need for stronger legal safeguards has been undertaken by such international organizations as PACE, which will produce a report, and OSCE. The voice of the European Parliament would add a strong message of support to the battle that many NGOs, including the Open Dialog Foundation, carry on in raising the general awareness and pushing for a comprehensive reform of INTERPOL aimed at providing more respect for human rights.

Yours Sincerely,

Anna Koj

Head of the EU Office
Open Dialog Foundation

Attachment:

1. The Open Dialog Foundation report: *The INTERPOL system is in need of reform* – published in February 2015

CC:

- Mr Elmar Brok, Chair of the AFET Committee of the EP
- Mr Claude Moraes, Chair of the LIBE Committee of the EP
- Mrs Elena Valenciano, Chair of the DROI Subcommittee of the EP