

Ms. Federica Mogherini
High Representative of the European
Union for Foreign Affairs and Security
Policy and Vice-President of the
European Commission
European External Action Service
1046 Brussels
Belgium

April 13, 2015

Dear High Representative,

We write to convey our deep disappointment that, unlike in 2010, no effort was made by the EU to prevent Iran from absurdly winning a seat on the Executive Board of UN Women, the world agency for gender equality and the empowerment of women. Unlike in 2010, no effort was made to support an alternative candidate from the Asian Group.

The election of Iran on Friday by an overwhelming two-thirds majority of the UN Economic and Social Council is a moral outrage that threatens to undermine the UN Secretary-General's recent report on Iran's pervasive discrimination against women.

We urge you now to at least speak out and condemn this hypocritical decision, which sends a dangerous message to the world, and to Iran's women's rights defenders.

As you know, Iran is considered one of the worst countries in the world on women's rights, ranking no. 137 out of 142 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index for 2014 of the World Economic Forum. The Secretary-General's report documents Iran's abysmal record on child marriages, forced head-covering enforced by morality police, acid attacks, domestic violence, spousal rape, state-enforced control of women by their husbands, and gross inequality in the workplace, education and public sphere.

And what sets Iran apart from other countries is its persecution, arrests and imprisonment of women's rights activists for exercising their rights to freedom of association and freedom of expression and opinion.

Accordingly, we urge you to speak out forcefully against this cynical attempt by Iran to undermine the global struggle for women's equality and empowerment.



Hillel C. Neuer
Executive Director