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News | 11.07.2013

Illegal deportation in Italy

Italian ministers must address concerns of collusion with Kazakhstan over deportation of dissident's wife and 6-year-old daughter

Italy must provide rapid answers to concerns of conspiring with Kazakhstan to deport a prominent Kazakh opposition figure's wife and 6-year-old daughter from Italy to Kazakhstan. French Green MEP **Nicole Kiil-Nielsen** today raised the case with the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) during the question time of the European Parliament's Human Rights Subcommittee meeting.

"The information we have so far gives serious cause for concern," said Ms Kiil-Nielsen, "At the very least it points to abuses of fundamental rights and due process that we certainly don't expect from an EU member state like Italy."

"We are talking here about a vulnerable woman and her young daughter basically being bundled out of the country in 48 hours on a private jet hired and accompanied by representatives of the Kazakhstan government," she said.

The question raised concerns about the actions and professional conduct of Italian police and officials involved in a raid and subsequent deportation of Alma Shalabayeva and Alua Ablyazova - wife and daughter of prominent Kazakh businessman and opposition figure Mukhtar Ablyazov, who remains in hiding over fears for his safety.

The official reason for the expulsion was that Ms Shalabayeva was in possession of forged travel documents, an assertion that has already been shown to be false.

"Normally deportation cases take some time to resolve, whereas this happened in the blink of an eye, and on the most spurious grounds," said Ms Kiil-Nielsen.

The Commission answered that the circumstances in which this case was handled raise serious concerns. The Commission would in particular like to know why Italy did not return Miss Shalabayeva to Latvia instead of Kazakhstan. Further to this they would like to know why the request for asylum was not properly handled. For these reasons the Commission officially asked the Italian authorities to provide all the relevant information and explanations.

The EEAS replied to Kiil-Nielsen's question that the case of Shalabayeva is well known to them and that the EU delegation in Astana is following and monitoring the case closely in order to ensure that Shalabayeva's rights are respected.

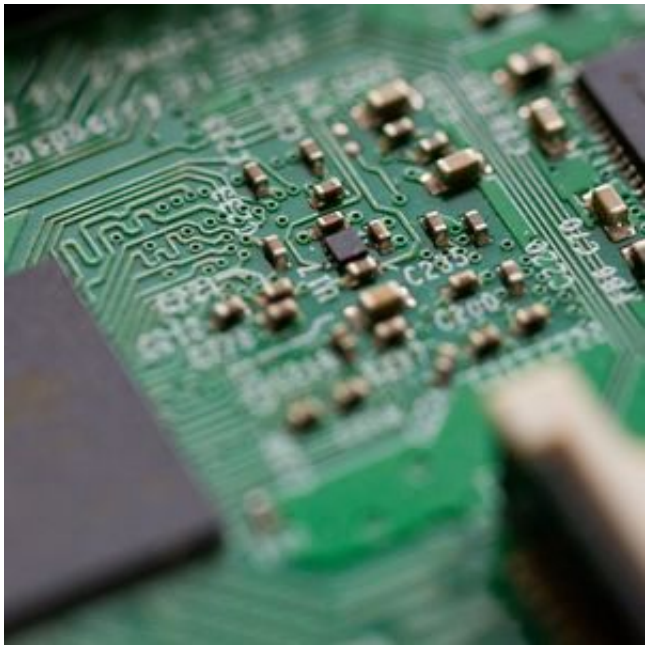
The EU High Representative for Foreign and Security policy, Catherine Ashton, has also been asked to take up the issue following a parliamentary question signed by Green MEPs including the chair of the Parliament's subcommittee on Human Rights, Barbara Lochbihler. The Greens expect the written answer by mid-August.

While lawyers attempt to shed light on allegations of collusion between the Italian and Kazakh governments, Ms Shalabayeva will shortly face trial on charges that could see her jailed for years and her daughter forcibly removed to a state orphanage.

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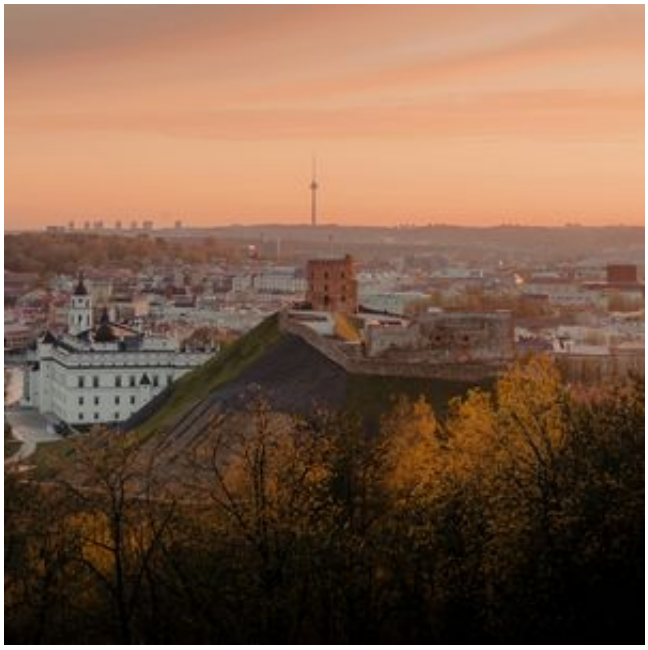
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