Press release | 12.02.2015

Saudi Arabia/human rights

EU Parliament calls for Raif Badawi's release in spite of centre-right opposition

The European Parliament today adopted a resolution on human rights in Saudi Arabia, including a call for the release of detained blogger Raif Badawi. After the vote, Green human rights spokesperson **Barbara Lochbihler** stated:

"The European Parliament has today called on the Saudi authorities to release Raif Badawi and all other political prisoners. It is welcome that the parliament was able to deliver this important message in spite of the shameless opposition of centre-right MEPs. The EU needs to engage much more proactively with the Saudi authorities, preparing a list of all political prisoners and systematically pressing for their release. It is also important that the EU looks to strengthen civil society in Saudi Arabia, as well as pushing for prison visits and the observation of trials.

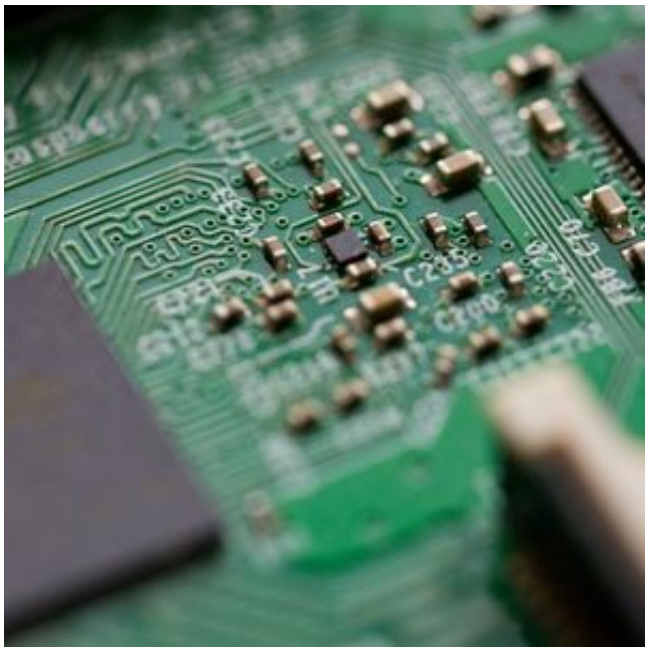
"This resolution passed in spite of the opposition of the centre-right and those MEPs, particularly those of the EPP group, should be strongly condemned for their failure to defend basic European values. Shying away from criticising blatant human rights abuses, like the groundless detention and public torture of Badawi, is not the way to have a meaningful dialogue with any third country. This shameful opposition undermines the credibility of the European Parliament and its role in defending human rights vis-a-vis third countries.

"While we welcome the resolution, it is regrettable that MEPs failed to support a Green proposal to call on EU member states to introduce sanctions against those involved in the sentencing and torture of Badawi. There is a need to rethink our relationship with Saudi Arabia: with one of the most repressive regimes in the world, which publicly tortures innocent individuals, it cannot be considered as a bastion of stability. As a consequence, EU member states should respect EU rules on arms exports and stop exporting weapons and surveillance technologies to Saudi Arabia."

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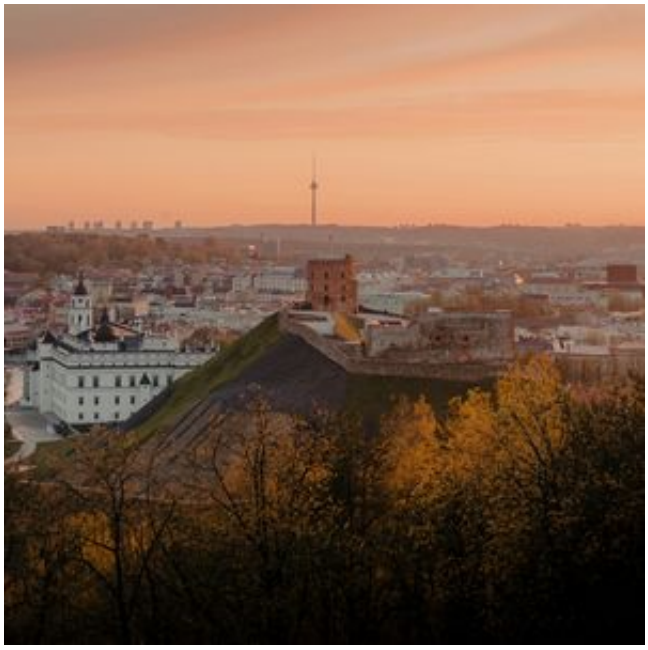
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Barbara Lochbihler

Member

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