

**Declaration of the President of the European Parliament,
Hans-Gert Pöttering,
about the trial against the
seven Bahá'í leaders in Iran
Brussels - 18 february 2009**

Dear colleagues,

We received these days new worrying news from the Islamic Republic of Iran. Seven leaders of the Bahá'í religious community have been in prison since May 2008; in these 8 months they have been denied access to legal assistance.

Now the seven leaders of the Baha'ís religious community will be judged in a trial, without respect of the basic requirements of law. The Nobel laureate and Iranian lawyer Shirin Ebadi, who was ready to take the defense of the arrested leaders, has herself received death threats.

The European Parliament demands of the Iranian authorities to urgently respect human rights and the rights of religious minorities and to rethink its charges against the seven leaders of Bahá'í - Fariba Kamalabadi, Jamaloddin Khanjani, Afif Naeimi, Saeid Rasaie, Mahvash Sabet, Behrouz Tavakkoli and Vahid Tizfahm. These people were arrested only because of their Faith and should be immediately released.