



# European Women Lawyers Association

The Voice of Women Lawyers Across Europe

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## PRESS RELEASE

### EWLA is in shock after human Sakharov prize winner for Freedom of Thought gets long jail sentence with lashes

EWLA is deeply concerned that the awardee of the Ludovic Trarieux Human Rights Prize of 2018, the European Parliament Sakharov prize of 2012 for Freedom of Thought and prominent Iranian human rights lawyer, Ms Sotoudeh, 55, has been sentenced to 38 years in jail and 148 lashes in Tehran earlier last week.

Ms Sotoudeh has built herself a strong reputation for defending Iranian women who removed their hijabs or head coverings in public in Iran. According to her husband, her charges include: 'assembly and collusion against national security', 'propaganda against the state', 'membership in various human rights groups', 'encouraging corruption and prostitution', 'appearing at the judiciary without Islamic hijab', 'disturbing public peace and order' and 'publishing falsehoods with the intent to disturb public opinion'.

EWLA strongly rejects and criticises this sentence against the award-winning human rights activist who has done nothing wrong but making use of her freedom of thought and expression.

EWLA's President, Katharina Miller states: "It is 'outrageous for a human being like Ms Sotoudeh to be facing the longest jail sentence with 148 lashes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century! This severe sentence is an affront not only to human dignity, but also to Ms Sotoudeh's inalienable human rights and the rule of law."

The European Women Lawyers Association (EWLA) is registered in Belgium as an international non-governmental, non-profit, association (Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif). It is a federation of national women lawyers associations from amongst the European Union countries and those of EFTA countries. Members of EWLA are also individual women lawyers and academics from these countries. EWLA pursues the co-operation of European women lawyers, in order to combine their specific expertise in monitoring law and politics seen from the angle of fundamental rights, and in particular gender equality.



The European Women Lawyers Association (**EWLA**) is registered in Belgium as an International Non-profit Association (**AISBL**)

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