



By awarding the Sakharov Prize to two Iranian activists, lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh and film director Jafar Panahi, the [European Parliament](#) acknowledged their plight and their outstanding efforts in their incessant struggle for human dignity, fundamental freedoms and political change in Iran, said EP President Martin Schulz at the Sakharov Prize award ceremony on Wednesday in Strasbourg.

The laureates were not able to attend the ceremony in person because they are not allowed to leave Iran.

In their acceptance speeches, delivered by their representatives Dr Shirin Ebadi and Mr Costa-Gavras, the laureates expressed their gratitude for the prize as a symbol of encouragement.

"I have only one dream; the dream of the realisation of justice and I believe that this dream will be realised in my country, by juridical independence," said Nasrin Sotoudeh in the speech delivered by Dr Ebadi. "Governments should know that in order to maintain their existence, they have no choice but to observe the rights of every individual," she added.

"Now the question is: why do the governments, the almighty and powerful, become more intolerant every day? History is the narrative of the few, making the lives of the many miserable, while using the most unacceptable excuses: difference of sex, language, religion or political ideas," said Jafar Panahi in the speech delivered by Costa Gavras.

EP president Martin Schulz said, "We, in the European Parliament, fully support our laureates' cry for justice and freedom in Iran and for respect for basic rights and freedoms, We are

honouring these people who are standing up for a better Iran," said who concluded by calling for the immediate release of Nasrin Sotoudeh.

*The Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought*

The Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, named in honour of the Soviet physicist and political dissident Andrei Sakharov, has been awarded by the European Parliament every year since 1988 and has become a well known symbol of the fight for human rights and democracy.

**Source:** [European Parliament](#)