

## An Open Letter From Antarctica

To His Excellency Prime Minister Luc Frieden,

After nearly two weeks of observing the reflections and reactions from your ministries, I write this open letter to you because, to date, there has been no appropriate, logical, or diplomatic response. I am neither your opposition nor aligned with your side, and your political views, religion, race, culture, or gender are not my concern. The sole focus is art and culture. My intention is not to teach anyone a lesson or to make a political statement. That is neither my place nor my concern.

Staying in Luxembourg was a deliberate choice. I submitted the required documents to change my visa status to self-employed because I was already part of the artistic scene and society. I felt at home, contributing as an artist to the local community as much as I could, and I wanted to continue doing so.

I understand the law very well, Your Excellency, but I also recognise the flexibility that lawmakers often provide to the executive body of governments. Law is an infrastructure, a guideline that requires human experience, insight, and interpretation to be applied appropriately in cases like mine. However, if the position is that the law must be applied uniformly to everyone, without consideration for nuance or individual circumstances, then one might ask: wouldn't it be more efficient, cost-effective, and faster to replace ministers with advanced machine learning models? These systems could analyse legal frameworks and enforce laws consistently, without deviation or delay. Moreover, wouldn't such tools also be capable of evaluating the artistic and cultural value of activities—particularly in this case—based on legal criteria defined in the law and the training of the model? After all, if human observation, research, and interpretation are deemed unnecessary, wouldn't technology handle this task more effectively, perhaps even offering greater economic value to the country?

I made the decision to stay because I saw the potential in this vibrant nation, with its rich and diverse cultural demographic. Staying was not out of necessity, I did not require your financial support, your residence permit, or your nationality. I will continue to work with Luxembourgish cultural institutions and artists as I am and I will be part of this society despite of my geographical location. Regardless of whether I obtain the nationality of another country in the future, I will always be known as an "Iranian visual artist." However, it is possible that you may be remembered for your lack of contribution to Luxembourg's cultural growth.

I do not compare myself to Picasso, but I wonder if even he could have thrived in an environment where bureaucracy overshadows creativity. Perhaps he, too, would have been discouraged by the time and effort required to only be considered as a person in Luxembourg, leaving little or no room for creation, to become Picasso. Perhaps if Luxembourg had a dedicated university of art, it might have offered a different lived experience and perspective on the importance of nurturing art and culture. In such a context, we likely wouldn't be discussing these basic but essential matters, such as the role of art and culture in development of a country.

I am fortunate and privileged to be in a position where I do not need anything from any government. However, many others are not as fortunate and find themselves struggling in similar situations. As I have mentioned from the beginning, this is not about me personally; it is about the principles at play and how these principles are applied and communicated. It is about the responsibility of those in power to ensure fairness, understanding, and respect in their actions and decisions.

Art, in its essence, is more than mere expression—it is a lifeline for societies. It serves as a bridge that connects diverse sectors, enhances societal flexibility, and strengthens resilience. Art alleviates anxiety over time, providing comfort and space for reflection, allowing societies to breathe and evolve. It creates common ground where differences can dissolve, fostering dialogue where there might otherwise be discord. In nurturing creativity, art enriches public discourse and becomes the foundation for shared experiences, the heart of empathy, and the key to understanding. Without art, we lose the opportunity to engage in these essential conversations, and without these conversations, progress is stifled.

I wish you peace and understanding as you reflect on these matters.

Sincerely,  
Alborz Teymoorzadeh  
Iranian Visual Artist  
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