



Association for Human Rights in Central Asia

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Karimov will visit Brussels January 24, but incognito, through the back door

We reported earlier that Uzbek dictator Islam Karimov is coming to Brussels on January 31. The Press Department of the European Commission have confirmed the visit, but named the date as January 24.

Islam Karimov will be received by the king of Belgium, Albert II, and will also have a meeting at NATO HQ.

The secrecy surrounding the arrival of the Uzbek dictator is understandable: if the European Council were to publicize the visit, they would have to give a public explanation for the motivation behind inviting the dictator, and would have to accredit journalists who would cover the visit and ask relevant questions.

We regret that in preparing the visit of the Uzbek dictator the Council of Europe is forced to go against its own principles of openness, publicity and transparency. We hope that this secretive approach does not become the rule in the EU's dealings with Uzbekistan.