

Strasbourg, 11 July 2007

Dear President of the European Commission, Mr. Durão Barroso
Dear Commissioners B. Ferrero-Waldner and Louis Michel,

We would like to call your attention to the fact that 38 Ethiopian political prisoners are likely to receive death penalty sentences, following the call for capital punishment by an Ethiopian prosecutor, announced earlier this week. Sentences are expected on Monday, 16 July.

Among those found guilty are Professor Mesfin Woldemariam, aged 76, founder and former president of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council; Dr Berhanu Negga, elected Mayor of Addis Ababa; Dr Yakob Hailemariam, law professor and former UN prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda; Ms Birtukan Mideksa, former judge; Andualem Ayele, editor of *Etiop* newspaper and others who are considered by Amnesty International as "prisoners of conscience".

We urge the European Commission to take the necessary diligences, in Addis Ababa, in order to ensure the release of these political prisoners, who are victims of a farcical trial and whose sole crime was to express their ideas on behalf of the opposition.

We recall that the EU has achieved significant results on prior occasions, following pressure on the Ethiopian government, namely by obtaining the release of a Commission Delegation local employee last year as well as the release of over 5.000 political prisoners in 2005.

We both know personally most of these prisoners, as they were active opposition leaders and civil society representatives with whom we have been in contact when we took part in the European Union and the European Parliament Election Observation Missions to the 2005 elections in Ethiopia. These EOMs make the EU to a certain extent responsible for the fate of those we encouraged to freely and fully participate in the elections.

Best regards,

Ana Gomes
Member of the European Parliament (PSE)
Head of European Union EOM to Ethiopian elections in 2005

Anders Wijkman
Member of the European Parliament (EPP)
Head of the European Parliament EOM to Ethiopian elections in 2005