



Ana Gomes

Member of the European Parliament

Catherine Ashton
High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Andris Piebalgs
Commissioner for Development

Brussels, July 4th 2014

Subject: Expulsion of Italian consultant from Angola

Dear Cathy,
Dear Andris,

I have been recently informed that Ms. Tirzi Maria Concetta, coordinator of the program PAANE (Programa de Apoio aos Actores Não Estatais) financed by the European Development Fund in Angola, had her work permit suddenly revoked by the Angolan authorities and subsequently had to leave the country.

Ms. Concetta's work focused on issues linked to the citizens' right to participation in the decentralization process and in economic, social and cultural rights. Since the first phase, PAANE always supported freedom of expression, capacity building of civil society organisations in new technologies, social networks and blogs. At the beginning of 2014, Ms. Concetta had different meetings with communication professionals, young students and, amongst them, the so called Central7311, who have organised some demonstrations since 2011. Ms. Concetta also collaborated in the organisation of a conference in the Catholic University in Luanda. The conference had as central theme the decentralization and local elections in Angola and included different political parties, churches and civil society organisations as participants.

On May 23rd, Ms. Concetta was informed, via SMS from the Angolan SME (Serviço de Migração e Fronteiras), that her work permit had been revoked and that she had to leave the country in 72 hours. Having attempted to contact the SME for an explanation without success, Ms. Concetta then met with Ms. Filipa Côrte Real e Ms. Manuela Navarro, from the Economic, Trade and Institutional Support Section of the EU Delegation in Luanda, on May 28th. In that meeting, Ms. Concetta was informed that the EU Delegation was aware of an investigation carried out against her by the Angolan authorities as someone who could be considered persona non grata for about a month, but opted to inform neither Ms. Concetta nor the Italian Embassy or the office in charge of EDF-funded programs, so as to avoid a diplomatic conflict.

Later, Ms. Concetta was notified by letter of the order of expulsion, without any justification, and left the country, having her contract cancelled, despite its validity until July 2015.

I am extremely concerned by the alleged behavior of the EU Delegation in Luanda in this case, which, by not acting on behalf of Ms. Concetta before the Angolan authorities or even informing of Ms. Concetta about the investigation carried out against her, did not act in the interest and for the protection of a EU citizen who, furthermore, was employed in the country to implement an

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EU-funded program! The fact that the project concerned human rights and support to civil society in Angola, which is clearly a sensitive issue for the Angolan authorities, is an even more pressing reason for special concern and protection. The EU Delegation should have, at least, provided an opportunity for Ms. Concetta to ask for an explanation before the Angolan authorities and defend her work.

I therefore ask you to provide a detailed explanation of the behavior of the EU Delegation in Luanda on this case. I urge you, furthermore, to request to the Angolan authorities for a justification for the expulsion order and to allow persons working on human rights in the country carry out their work without hindering.

Best regards,

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