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Európsky parlament Evropski parlament Euroopan parlamentti Europaparlamentet

Bert Koenders
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of The Netherlands

Brussels, 18 February 2016

Dear Minister,

We wish to express our dismay over the fact that Ms. Lidi Rimmelzvaal, current Dutch Ambassador of The Netherlands to Ethiopia, Djibouti and the African Union, tweeted on the 1st of February 2016 a commentary piece previously tweeted by the Ethiopian Embassy to the European Union concerning the European Parliament's Resolution on Ethiopia, adopted on the 21st of January 2016, adding "*If you have seen #EuropeanParliament resolution on #Ethiopia, you should also read this!*".

We are baffled to see a EU diplomat clearly and publicly endorsing the content of a comment which explicitly undermines a European Parliament Resolution, namely in the following passages:

"Any resolution presented under this rule is given insignificant or no value by the members of Parliaments themselves and by the EU institutions at large. The fact that only 41 out of 751 members of Parliament attended the debate is a clear indication of the minimal value attached to it. It is also a clear manifestation that the resolution is politically motivated agenda aimed at defaming the government of Ethiopia.

(...)

But it is our firm believe that the respected institution and its members would not dare to endorse resolutions condemning countries/ Governments simply because certain politically motivated members of the Parliament have come up with a resolution. That is what happened with the resolution on Ethiopia. It is hard for me to assume that all the co-sponsors have properly read and digested the points lined up to condemn the Ethiopian Government."

The decision to hold a debate and resolution on the situation in Ethiopia was decided at the highest level, the Conference of Presidents, and the Joint Motion for Resolution was negotiated, signed and endorsed by representatives of seven political groups, representing clear consensus and support from wide spectrum in the European Parliament. Having been adopted in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, the Resolution is an official policy guideline of the European Parliament, and not a "politically motivated" move from certain Members of the European Parliament.

It is very disappointing to see a member of the European diplomatic corps in Addis Ababa endorsing views which attempt to undermine the validity of the Resolution as a EU-policy instrument and the motivations to adopt it other than Parliament's serious concern and principled action towards the protection of human rights. It is our understanding that EU



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diplomats are supposed to have, at least, due regard to the European Parliament's views and recommendations. By tweeting such positions endorsed by the Ethiopian Embassy, the Dutch Ambassador inappropriately undermined the European Parliament's recommendations and active involvement in the promotion of human rights in EU External policies.

Please confirm to us that in acting as Ms. Lidi Remmelzvaal did, she was not fulfilling any instructions from your government.

Best regards,

Ana Gomes (S&D)
Mariya Gabriel (EPP)
Marie-Christine Vergiat (GUE/NGL)
Fabio Massimo Castaldo (EFDD)
Jordi Sebastià (Greens/EFA)

cc:

- Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission
- Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament