

LOUIS MICHEL

MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 01.03.2007

HD/yw D(07)237 - A(07)324

Dear Ms Gomes,

Thank you for your message of 22 January bringing to my attention your concern over the incident at the Qellem School in Dembi Dollo, Ethiopia, and asking for information on action taken by the Commission in this respect. You also asked the Commission to provide the European Parliament with the report produced by the EU observer to the political prisoners' trial in Addis Ababa.

Regarding the Qellem School incident, I can assure you that the EC Delegation and several Embassies and agencies have expressed concern about this event, which has been discussed and is followed very closely in the Human Rights Subgroup of the Ambassadors' Donors Group.

The EC Delegation also met with the Ethiopian Human Right Commission asking for clarification on the event and for possible initiatives undertaken in this respect. The European Commission has been informed that the Ethiopian Human Right Commission, following a complaint received by Mr Negasso Gidada, the ex President of Ethiopia who is an independent member of the Parliament, will send to Dembi Dollo an official investigation team composed by the Deputy Chief Commissioner and two investigators. We will continue to follow this matter very closely.

Regarding the report of the EU observer of the political prisoners' trial, I wish to inform you that this report was produced in the framework of a contract with the then EU Presidency (Finland) and delivered to the Finnish Ambassador in Addis Ababa at the end of the mission. The report was unofficially submitted to the Ministry of Justice, and shared in paper version with the EU Heads of Missions in Addis. It is an internal, confidential document and was not, and will not be made public. Any document of this sort would be regarded as subjudice if the intents were known before the completion of the trial.

I share your concern that human rights abuses in Ethiopia should not go unnoticed. The European Commission will remain committed to engage the Ethiopian authorities on this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

Louis Michel

Mrs Ana Gomes
MEP
Bât. Altiero Spinelli, ASP 15G146
rue Wiertz 60
1047 Brussels

OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE :