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Ms Ana Gomes MEP  
European Parliament  
Rue Wiertz 60  
1047 Bruxelles

*Dear Ana,*

Thank you for your letter of 4 July 2014 on the detention of Mr Berardi, the Italian citizen currently held in prison in Bata, Equatorial Guinea.

The EEAS and its diplomats accredited to Equatorial Guinea have been following the case of Mr Berardi from the beginning, including the case of Mr Ponciano Mbomio Nvo, Mr Berardi's lawyer, whom you mention in your letter.

We are working closely with EU Member States' consulates and embassies represented in Equatorial Guinea and have fully supported all the diplomatic initiatives of Italy, as well as pursuing our own contacts with the authorities of Equatorial Guinea to achieve a rapid resolution of the case. We have also repeatedly called for respect for international standards in the conditions in which he is being detained, as part of our wider human rights dialogue with the Equatorial Guinean authorities.

I would like to ensure you that the EU remains concerned about the overall human rights situation in Equatorial Guinea and that priority will be given to democracy and human rights issues in its dialogue with the national authorities. The EU will continue to monitor the situation and in particular the follow up of the Universal Periodic Review at the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Finally, let me congratulate you for your re-election and wish you a very fruitful mandate in the new Parliament.

*Sincerely*

*CA*

Catherine Ashton