

Brussels, 03 AVR. 2018
A(2018) 1165671-1326208

Ms Ana Maria Gomes MEP
European Parliament
Brussels

Dear Ana,

I would like to thank you for your email dated 1 March, 2018 regarding the Spokesperson's Statement issued on 19 February, which further illustrates your welcomed interest in Ethiopia following your three earlier letters sent this year.

I understand that the comparison with the text of the US statement shows a more diplomatic EU stance. Nevertheless, our statement did express our concerns about the implications of the State of Emergency and highlighted that it risks undermining ongoing reforms. We must also bear in mind that the US issued a local statement while the EU assessed the situation to warrant a Spokesperson statement from Headquarters.

The EU policy towards Ethiopia is based on both, public, and private messaging. This includes regular meetings of EU Special Representatives (EUSR) for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis, and EUSR for the Horn of Africa, Alexander Rondos, with high level Ethiopian officials. The EU-Ethiopia Strategic Engagement, signed in June 2016, has been equally affected by the ongoing crisis as we have had to postpone a number of high level political dialogues, as well as economic and business events. The only dialogue launched so far remains the sectoral dialogue on Governance and Human Rights, held in Addis, in April 2017.

We have witnessed some breakthrough further to EU and international community engagement, notably the release, mentioned in your email, of many political activists and leaders of the opposition, including many which you and I had mentioned to the authorities as people who did not belong in prison, such as Dr. Merera Gudina and Bekele Gerba. On 5 March – during the State of Emergency – Yonatan Tesfaye, spokesman of the opposition Blue Party, was released. The Prime Minister announced the upcoming closure of the Maekelawi detention centre, which the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis, had just visited in April 2017.

As you recommend in your email and in line with our Statement, we have and will continue to encourage the authorities to deepen political reforms and continue releasing political activists and leaders of the opposition who are held in prison without a legally defined situation – as reiterated by DSG Leffler to the Ethiopian counterparts during his recent visit to Addis Ababa.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Mogherini', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Federica Mogherini