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Ms. Federica Mogherini

High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission

Mr. Giovanni Kessler

Director-General of the European Anti-fraud Office

Brussels, 28 September 2017

Dear Federica,

Dear Mr. Kessler,

I recently visited Cabo Verde, together with MEPs Charles Tannock and Andrey Kovatchev, as members of the Friendship Group with that country in the EP.

Several people there brought to my attention that Mr. José Manuel Pinto Teixeira, who just recently ended his tenure as EU Ambassador to Cape Verde, acquired a piece of land from the municipality of Praia, in the most valued and expensive area of the capital city. Mr. Teixeira has made known that in that piece of land he is constructing a private residence, since he intends to reside in Praia.

The title of the transfer of the land, which passed from public property to private property, is however the object of much speculation in Cape Verde: initially the Praia municipality said that the piece of land was given, later that it was purchased, but it has failed until now to disclose the contract, what amount was involved and show proof of the payment.

By early August, when Mr. Teixeira was still representing the EU, the construction had begun; it was then disclosed that the owner was the Ambassador of the EU. That fuelled reactions in social networks, on local and Portuguese newspapers¹ and at the national television: questions were raised on whether Ambassador Pinto Teixeira was using the position as representative of the EU to benefit personally (rewarded "for his good deeds" with a piece of land at a prime zone), and why the Municipality was not being transparent and benefited the EU Ambassador to the detriments of others. The Municipality was accused of double standards, since years earlier it had prevented a Cape-Verdean citizen from buying and building on the same piece land, while suddenly Mr. Pinto Teixeira was authorised to do just that. Also, Portugal expressed concerns, since for long it was trying to buy the same piece of land - adjacent to its Ambassador's residence and crucial for its security - but was always unable, since that was public property².

Both Mr. Pinto Teixeira and the EU became targets of a smear campaign, under accusations of lack of transparency, corruption, impunity and unethical behaviour. The municipality issued (August 8th)

¹ <https://www.dn.pt/lusa/interior/compra-de-terreno-por-parte-de-delegado-da-ue-em-cabo-verde-gera-polemica-8692397.html>

² <https://www.dn.pt/lusa/interior/portugal-preocupado-com-seguranca-de-residencia-oficial-em-cabo-verde-8790295.html>



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a Press Release³ stating that "in the last 5 years" Mr. Pinto Teixeira provided "an undeniable contribution for the strengthening of the EU-CV special partnership"; that "the Municipality is honoured" that he chose "Praia to live" and that "Mr. Pinto Teixeira made a request to the Municipality to buy a piece of land for construction of his own residence"; furthermore, it stated that the purchase was made through a contract between the seller and the buyer in conformity with the value of the land property accorded by the municipality.

More recently, all 3 opposition parties (PAICV,UCID,PP) held an unprecedented joint press conference criticising the Praia Municipality for its policy of distributing/selling public land, questioning the criteria, the processes, the legality. In particular it was raised the case of the piece of land acquired by "the Ex-Ambassador of the EU, Mr. Pinto Teixeira".

The recently retired Mr. Pinto Teixeira was the EU Ambassador in Praia until the end of August. As such, he was under duty to behave ethically and according to European Union values. At all times, he should defend the good image and the respectability of the EU.

Acquiring public land for personal gain while in office, through a municipality that benefitted from EU programs (namely via a project directed at supporting local municipalities), with the Praia Municipality making clear it was rewarding the good work done by Mr. Teixeira - all that raises suspicions on probity, legality and ethical behaviour. Indifference to the public backlash and inaction in defending the image of the EU raises additional questions.

I also found out that Mr. Pinto Teixeira, through his action and public statements, showed that he was a staunch supporter of MPD, the current ruling party, while expressing strong dislike for PAICV. In 2016, the PAICV Government was rumoured to be considering declaring him "persona non grata". It is widespread the perception that Mr. Pinto Teixeira was instrumental in the MPD campaign to win the elections, supporting it with strategic input and also financially. Some circles believe that the acquisition of land in Praia/Santiago and other plots in other islands was actually rewarding that political support. In those circles, Mr. Pinto Teixeira is perceived as having spent the last year "preparing his retirement", in return for EU project financing of several projects. It is also rumoured that Mr. Pinto Teixeira, during his tenure as EU Ambassador, asked for the Cape-Verdean nationality and was recently granted with it.

I believe it is my duty to report these serious allegations and ask you to investigate them since they negatively affect the EU's credibility in Cape Verde. The EU must show to the Cape-Verdeans that it conducts itself in respect for the principles of transparency and accountability.

Best regards,
Ana Gomes

Ana Gomes, MEP

³ <https://www.facebook.com/CMPraia/photos/a.509875639043168.115398.169947043036031/1625678867462834/?type=3&theater>