

José Manuel Barroso
President of the European Commission

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Brussels,
BARROSO (2013) 718972
BARROSO (2013)

Dear Ms Gomes,

Thank you for your e-mail of 16 April about the EU's relations with Ethiopia.

I had the opportunity to meet the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Mr Hailemariam Desalegn, twice in the last few weeks, during his visit to Brussels on 18 April, and at the EU-AU college-to-college meeting in Addis Ababa on 26 April.

On both occasions, I raised the human rights situation in Ethiopia, principally the need for more political space and respect of fundamental freedom, including freedom of speech. In particular in the meeting we held in Addis, the Prime Minister engaged in an open conversation on the topic and I left no ambiguity as to the importance that the EU attaches to these issues.

The Commission will continue to promote human rights in Ethiopia, and to raise matters of concern with the government, including issues of governance, human rights and democratisation.

Internal stability is crucially important for the development of Ethiopia and the region of the Horn of Africa. In this respect, I believe that, in the long run, Ethiopia's stability is best served by safeguarding the democratic and human rights principles that are enshrined in the Ethiopian constitution.

Yours sincerely,



José Manuel BARROSO

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