

LOUIS MICHEL

MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 18. 04. 2008  
HD/ynw D(08)570 - A(08)1049

Honourable Member of Parliament,  
Dear Dr Lucas,

Thank you for your letter of 26 March informing me about your constituents' concerns regarding the situation in Eritrea.

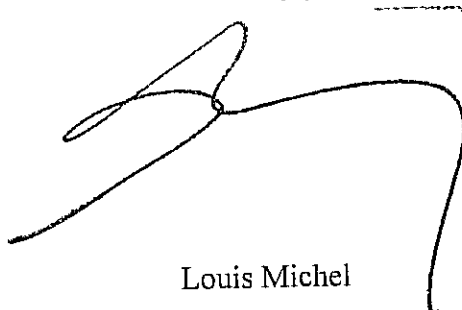
I am aware of, and very concerned by, the tight grip the Eritrean Government maintains over the country and its people and by the continued restriction of civil and political liberties including increasingly severe limitations on freedom of association, expression and worship. The Commission is monitoring the Human Rights situation in Eritrea through the EC Delegation to Eritrea and the regular exchanges with EU Member States.

At every possible opportunity both President Barroso and I have raised these concerns with the Eritrean authorities. The last such occasion was in the context of the EU-AU Summit in Lisbon in December 2007 where I raised with President Isaias the deep concern of the EU regarding the human rights' situation in the country and I will continue to do so in order to bring about positive changes. I urged the Government of the State of Eritrea to comply with its international human rights obligations and to convene a dialogue on human rights with the EU as soon as possible.

Furthermore, the Cotonou Agreement provides for political dialogue under Article 8. Through this dialogue the fulfilment of Eritrea's contractual agreements will be addressed and followed up. Development cooperation opens the space in which dialogue is possible including on issues such as Human Rights.

I am determined to pursue a firm dialogue with the Eritrean authorities as a means to engage them in order to improve the Human Rights situation in the country and contribute to the stability of the Horn of Africa region.

Sincerely yours,



Louis Michel

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