

Parliamentary question

14 March 2011

E-002319/2011

Question for written answer
to the Commission

Rule 117

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► Subject: Justification of aid to Eritrea

As a follow-up to the answers to our written question of 9 November on spending EUR 122 million in aid for Eritrea, we seek a further explanation about the justification for this aid.

The answers state that the EC is providing Eritrea with 'support for the Justice Sector in Eritrea (training and support of magistrate courts) and support to the National Confederation of Eritrean Workers for the strengthening of the social dialogue in Eritrea'.

1. How does the Commission envisage a social dialogue between a workers' union and the oppressive regime of Isaias Afewerki? Would the Commission agree that a social dialogue requires an atmosphere in which both sides must be able to speak openly, and that this is not the case in Eritrea at the moment?
2. How can the Commission guarantee that the money is well spent? And what are the indications for this?
3. Does the Commission agree that facilitating a social dialogue with a non-democratic regime legitimises that same regime? Does the Commission agree that development projects in the field of rebuilding the country presume the involvement of the Eritrean authorities?
4. What is the Commission's assessment of the human rights situation in Eritrea?
5. Taking into account that human rights are an essential element for development cooperation in the Cotonou Agreement, should not the financial support to this regime, other than humanitarian aid, be put on hold?
6. Given the current developments in the countries neighbouring Eritrea, should not the EU convey to President Afewerki that continuing oppression and human rights violations will sooner or later turn the people against him?