Resolution on Ethiopia, notably the case of Dr Merera Gudina

2017/2682(RSP) - 18/05/2017 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on Ethiopia, and in particular on the case of Dr Merera Gudina.

The text adopted in plenary was presented as a joint resolution by the EPP, S&D, ECR, ALDE, Greens /EFA, EFDD and Barbara KAPPEL.

Members recalled that Ethiopia is one of the fastest growing economies in Africa, with an average growth rate of 10% over the past decade. It has also attracted significant foreign investment in agriculture, construction and manufacturing, major development projects such as the construction of hydroelectric dams and hydroelectric facilities, and widespread land-leasing, often to foreign companies. Nevertheless, the country remains one of the poorest with a GDP of $632 per capita (the 2014 human development index ranks it 173rd of 187 countries).

Members pointed out that the humanitarian crisis, including the cholera epidemic and the current food shortage in the Horn of Africa, which has affected the Ogaden region and other parts of Ethiopia, has caused the death of many people and threatened thousands more. It is also facing a crisis of refugees from Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea.

Ethiopia is also facing an internal crisis due to the implementation of a large-scale urban development project in Addis Ababa that involves the displacement of millions of Oromo farmers.

On 30 November 2016, in Addis Ababa, security forces arrested Professor Merera Gudina, the Chairman of the Ethiopian Oromo Federalist Congress opposition party, following his visit to the European Parliament on 9 November 2016, during which he had participated in a round table with other opposition leaders.

Accordingly, Parliament called on the Ethiopian government to release Merera Gudina and all other political prisoners and to drop all charges against them.

The Ethiopian government was urged to:

- continue to lift restrictions and to put an end to the state of emergency which is an obstacle to freedom of expression;
- no longer resort to Law 652/2009 against terrorism to prevent or repress legitimate peaceful protests;
- respect fully the freedom of expression, association and the press as provided for in the Ethiopian Constitution;
- allow human rights organisations and NGOs unrestricted access to all parts of the country, particularly those affected by conflict and protest;
- prevent ethnic discrimination and to adopt the necessary measures for the establishment of a peaceful and constructive dialogue between the various communities.

Drought: Members welcomed the EUR 165 million in additional aid to the region to fight the crisis in South Sudan and neighbouring countries and to counter the effects of drought in Ethiopia, Somalia and in Kenya. However, they believed that the future cooperation of the Union with Ethiopia should be conditional on substantial progress on human rights indicators.