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Mr Keith Taylor MEP
European Parliament
Rue Wiertz 60
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Dear Keith Taylor

Thank you for your letter of 29 September regarding Aster Fissehatsion. I am aware of her case and I am concerned about her fate.

The European Union has expressed serious concern at the poor human rights record of Eritrea, and especially the fate of detained persons – among them prisoners of conscience, dissidents and journalists.

Despite repeated EU appeals at various levels and at every possible occasion, these prisoners remain in detention. None of them has ever been formally charged in court, and their fate remains unknown. Families, legal representatives and medical doctors have been denied access to the individuals. This conduct is in clear violation of the obligations established in international law, to which Eritrea is party.

The European Union has repeatedly called on the Eritrean authorities to give unconditional release to all political prisoners, including Ms Fissehatsion. A symbolic and political sign of the Union's engagement is my statement on political prisoners in Eritrea, which was issued on the 10th anniversary of their detention, on 15 September 2011.

The EU raises the matter of political prisoners within its political dialogue with the Eritrean government. The Eritrean administration is fully aware of its international obligations, of the EU's expectations, as well as of European citizens' concerns.

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Catherine Ashton