

ORAL QUESTION H-0116/07  
for Question Time at the part-session in March 2007  
pursuant to Rule 109 of the Rules of Procedure  
by Alain Hutchinson  
to the Commission

Subject: Parliamentary elections and human rights in Djibouti

On a recent visit to Djibouti, in recognition of Djibouti's contribution to regional stability and its role as a mediator, messenger and peace-maker, Commissioner Michel asked President Guelleh to step up political relations between Djibouti and the EU, which, among other things, is one the largest development aid donors. Although the Republic of Djibouti is of clear strategic importance in both regional and global terms, it has an authoritarian presidential regime. No more than a few days after the Commissioner's visit, a number of journalists and members of the opposition Movement for Democratic Renewal (MRD) were arbitrarily arrested, as reported by Reporters Without Borders, among others. The regime's treatment of opponents in Djibouti raises a number of questions, particularly in the light of the fact that parliamentary elections are to be held there in January 2008.

How does the Commission intend to go about ensuring long-term respect for human rights in Djibouti and, with this in mind, does it intend to organise – or to support the organisation of – a European election observation mission to the country in 2008?

Tabled: 12.02.2007  
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