



Judith SARGENTINI MEP

## **Statement on the establishment of the Informal European Parliament Group for Democracy in Eritrea**

A group of Members of the European Parliament has established cooperation across the political groups to monitor closely developments in Eritrea. The group is concerned with the lack of democratic rights, the rule of law and the increasing number of refugees and asylum seekers from Eritrea.

The group's members include Mrs Judith Sargentini (chairperson), Mrs Ana Gomes, Mr. Olle Schmidt, Mrs Eva-Britt Svensson, Mr Charles Tannock, Mrs Isabelle Lövin, Mr Alf Svensson, Mrs Marita Ulvskog, Mrs Ska Keller, Mr Ivo Vajgl and Mr Watson.

The group aims to ensure that Eritrea is high on the agenda of the European Parliament. MEPs have insisted that Eritrea should allow a visit of MEPs to the country to see how the country benefits from the EU's aid package.

The European Parliament group for a Democratic Eritrea is concerned with the fate of the many political prisoners, among whom Dawit Isaak, nominated for the EP Sacharov price. The group supports the Dawit Isaak campaign, led by his younger brother Esayas Isaak.

A hearing, hosted by Mrs Sargentini, will be held at the end of November and will discuss the issue of Eritrean asylum-seekers (in the context of the Italy-Lybia agreement), the situation on child soldiers in Eritrea, and UN Security Council Resolution 1907 on Eritrea. The hearing will also discuss the situation of political prisoners in Eritrea, including Dawit Isaak.