

ACT

From: ACT <info@againstchildtrafficking.org>
Sent: Sonntag, 10. Mai 2020 14:41
To: ec-president-vdl@ec.europa.eu
Subject: Open letter

Dear President Von der Leyen,

I know that your Cabinet is treating the case of whistle-blower Roelie Post, and the child rights issue that goes with it, as a closed chapter. It is not.

Hereby I ask you to review the situation and to find a fair solution for all involved. And that includes the NGO Against Child Trafficking (ACT), which was set up at the behest of Secretary General Catherine Day in order to temporarily second Mrs. Post there. There was no way to provide protection, Mrs. Post and I were told over and over again, when we raised concern about safety. I won't enter into the details, which are known with your Cabinet, the Secretary General and DG HR.

I would like to bring the following to your attention.

The reason Mrs. Post got into trouble was because of her involvement as Task Manager in the review of child rights in Romania. The European Commission, as guardian of the treaty, ruled that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was binding, and that the Hague Adoption Convention was not part of the *acquis communautaire*. Hence intercountry adoption was barred as child protection measure and could, if all, only be the extreme exception.

Since Romania closed its business in children, Commissioner Verheugen was concerned that now the adoption agencies would move to other countries. And they did.

ACT monitored and reported about it. In 2009 we brought out the report 'Fruits of Ethiopia', which was in hindsight the beginning of the end of intercountry adoption from that country.

In 2010 Mrs. Post, on ARD Report from Brussels, predicted that the next hot spot would be Congo. In 2016, during the filming of "The Traffickers", Mrs. Post indeed could direct the filmmakers to Congo. The "Traffickers" exposed how children were taken against the will of their parents to Italy, through mediation of the EU financed agency Amici dei Bambini.

Congo, like Romania, had in the meantime put a moratorium on adoptions. The resistance of the adoption agencies was huge. This time, unlike in Romania, the EU stood at the side of the adoption lobby and pushed to get the children 'freed'. Through access to document requests at EU-level, as well as in EU Member States, this became painfully clear.

In the meantime there is a criminal case filed in Belgium against 14 stakeholders (including civil servants). The case started because the Congolese Dieu Merci Kitambo filed a complaint about the illegal adoption of three children of his relatives. Mr. Kitambo had been misled by the Belgian side that the children would go on a holiday camp within the DRC, instead they were sent to Belgium.

Beginning of March the trial started. That day Mr. Kitambo received a death threat. This was made public by a Belgian journalist. I contacted the journalist and advised him to write to the EU Delegation in Kinshasa. I also wrote myself to the EU Ambassador, who himself kept me informed of the follow up. I was informed that the Ambassador had signed the resettlement grant for the relocation of Mr. Kitambo for six months.

In light of the above it is unexplainable that the EU protects foreign citizens, but not their own staff and/or the organisation set up to fight child trafficking on behalf of the EU.

Mrs. Post has relocated. I have relocated. For reasons of security.

The financial implications, as well as non-financial, are huge. Combined now with the corona crisis, we are hitting an all-time low.

Please let us know urgently how you will use your discretionary powers to protect us appropriately and repair the damage done.

Yours sincerely,

Arun Dohle

www.againstchildtrafficking.org