



## **EURO-BURMA OFFICE**

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20 October 2010

To the members of the European Burma Network (EBN),

I am writing in response to an unsigned letter of 29 September 2010, from unnamed members of the EBN who met recently in Athens, that was emailed by Pierre Yves Gillet of Actions Birmanie, Belgium.

The letter informed the Euro-Burma Office (EBO) that its observer status at the EBN has been revoked because the network deemed that *'EBO actions are no longer consistent with the mandate of Burma's elected leaders and ethnic leadership'*.

In a democratic society, it is the norm is to allow anyone who is accused to defend themselves before their accuser. EBO has not been invited to speak at EBN meetings for a number of years. EBN has not asked EBO to clarify its position or its rationale. We do not know who has accused us of not representing the democracy movement and who sat in judgment on us in Athens.

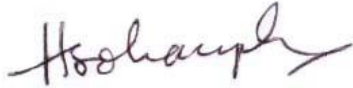
When EBO helped found the EBN, the purpose was to empower the network so that it could better promote democracy in Burma. EBO became an observer in order to continue to assist the network if and when requested. If our services are no longer required, we are content to relinquish our observer status. The current leadership of the EBN and some in the Burmese democracy movement may disagree with the EBO's actions regarding the 2010 elections. However, we reject the claim that *'EBO actions are no longer consistent with the mandate of Burma's elected leaders and ethnic leadership'*.

Over the years, the Burmese democracy movement has expanded to include many more voices from Burma. In addition to the leaders elected in 1990, the ethnic leaders who continue to resist the military, and exiles, there now exists in Burma a wide and diverse civil society, ethnic leaders from the ceasefire groups, and new political parties who are also working for democracy. All actors play an equal and crucial role. Their views and opinions need to be taken into account. To not acknowledge them is to ignore the majority of the people in Burma who are taking enormous risks to bring democracy.

The different communities have a diversity of opinions, needs and experiences. These differences are a source of strength that can allow for a consensus on national unity to be forged. Only authoritarian regimes demand uniformity. The role of international supporters of the movement should be to encourage inclusion and dialogue rather than to create or promote divisions along party or ethnic lines.

The Euro-Burma Office will continue to both support the Burmese democracy movement prepare for a transition to democracy and to keep the international community informed about Burma. We remain committed to working with anybody who is seeking to promote democracy in Burma.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Harn Yawng Hwe', written in a cursive style.

(Harn Yawng Hwe)  
Executive Director, Euro-Burma Office