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10th anniversary of ICC

Budget cuts send wrong signal

On Wednesday, the Assembly of State Parties of the International Criminal Court (ICC) will meet in The Hague to celebrate its tenth anniversary. Only recently, Germany and the UK have both asked for cuts to the ICC budget, and the two countries are planning to defend their plan before their international partners tomorrow. This proposal stands in stark contrast to the achievements of the ICC and comes at a particularly bad time in its development and work.

Ten years after the establishment of the ICC, we can look back on its work and come to a positive overall conclusion. The first permanent international criminal court has become a reality, and the ICC has been operating ever-more effectively in recent years.

The proposal by Germany and Great Britain stands in stark contrast to this satisfactory development and comes at a particularly bad time. Only last year, the UN Security Council – including the UK and Germany – referred the case of Libya to the ICC, asking The Hague to investigate possible crimes against humanity. This additional task is not an easy one, and needs time and resources. Moreover, the Netherlands is going to stop funding the court's accommodation in The Hague in 2013, adding 5.9m euros to the ICC's expenses each year. If the Assembly of State Parties was to follow Germany and the UK, this would create and even greater de facto reduction of the ICC budget at a time when the court is facing up to 10,000 applications for trials!

Commenting on the proposed cuts, Green MEP Barbara Lochbihler (Germany), chair of the European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights, said:

"In the year of the tenth anniversary of the ICC, Germany and the UK are sending a devastating signal. The ICC has become an outstanding actor in the fight against war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. It deserves adequate funding, as much as the victims of those crimes deserve justice. This is why the European Parliament has repeatedly called on the State Parties to provide the court with the resources they need. The member states of the ICC should comply with this demand. Anything else would weaken the worldwide fight against impunity."

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Responsible MEPs



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