

Nicolas Sarkozy
President of the European Council

Brussels, 10 July 2008
Our Ref: B800

Dear Mr. Sarkozy,

Subject: Paris Summit for the Mediterranean

Amnesty International understands that the Paris Summit, which will take place on 13 July 2008, will be the inaugural meeting of the "Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean". We would like to take this opportunity to draw to your attention our serious concerns regarding the absence of any human rights dimension in the current 'Union for the Mediterranean' proposal.

The European Union has committed itself to raise human rights concerns through all of its bilateral and multilateral partnerships with third countries, and to mainstream human rights into all of its policies, including trade policy. Since the launch of the Barcelona Process, Amnesty International has welcomed the opportunity that this has offered to raise human rights concerns, whilst also acknowledging the continuing human rights deficit in its operation. The EU has failed so far to effectively implement the human rights clause common to all Association Agreements, and we have consistently urged the EU to reaffirm human rights as a cornerstone for relations with Southern Mediterranean countries. However, it is clear from both the original 'Union for the Mediterranean' proposal and the subsequent Communication from the European Commission that no single reference has been made to human rights commitments and obligations.

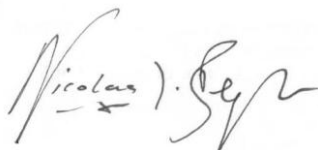
Amnesty International is particularly concerned that the current proposal specifically excludes dialogue on human rights and appears to provide a basis for bypassing the human rights clause, which underpins all EU relations with third countries. It appears that the proposal aims only at reinforcing cooperation in the framework of the existing "Economic and Financial Partnership" by relocating this outside of the Association Agreements. This seriously undermines the core principles that govern the EU's external relations, and provides a dangerous precedent for the future by making existing human rights instruments obsolete.

In addition, Amnesty International is deeply concerned about the lack of the involvement of civil society in the project. Although participation of civil society actors has been one of the main features of the Barcelona Process, it is non-existent in this proposal.

In this context, Amnesty International calls on the French Presidency at the Paris Summit to:

- reaffirm the EU's commitment that human rights principles govern all EU external relations;
- ensure that the EU holds to its commitment to systematically raise human rights concerns in all bilateral and multilateral dialogues, to mainstream human rights into all external policy areas, and to fully involve civil society; and
- develop human rights monitoring mechanisms within the Union for the Mediterranean, to examine human rights concerns in *all* countries, in order to address the current human rights deficit.

Yours sincerely,



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Geneviève Garrigos
Chair
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