

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



European Institutions Office

Martin Schulz

President of the European Parliament

Brussels, 20 January 2012
Our Ref: B1149

Dear President,

Congratulations on your election as President of the European Parliament. We wish you a successful term of office and look forward to working with you.

We have detected a disconcerting trend to the European Union's focus in recent months. The institutions are dwelling far more on issues relating to the economic crisis and the threat to the euro, which is at the expense of the necessary attention to human rights issues. We hope your helmsmanship over the coming years will see human rights regain their rightful place on the Parliament's list of priorities.

Looking at the current economic crisis, not only do the related austerity measures threaten social and economic rights, the growing use of fast-track decision-making, new bodies and the redistribution of power pose a tangible threat to the guarantees which have been established to protect human rights.

One of the European Parliament's principal roles is to act as a watchdog, ensuring that EU countries and institutions fully respect human rights, and that these are not down-graded under the excuse of exceptional measures to tackle the economic crisis. We are encouraged by your inauguration speech where you mentioned that "Whoever breaches the values enshrined in our Charter of Fundamental Rights must reckon with us as adversaries."

Another area of extreme concern to us is the urgent need to combat discrimination in EU countries, especially anti-Gypsyism, which is frequently used as a tool to rally support from the general population. We are also deeply disturbed at the regular abuse by EU countries of the human rights of migrants and asylum-seekers.

We are, of course, closely following Parliament's debate on Hungary, and would welcome an early opportunity of briefing you on our concerns on this topic as well as our broader objectives for the year ahead.

Yours sincerley,

Dr. Nicolas J. Beger

Director