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EURO-MEDITERRANEAN HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK
RÉSEAU EURO-MÉDITERRANÉEN DES DROITS DE L'HOMME
الشبكة الأوروبية - المتوسطية لحقوق الإنسان

Catherine Ashton

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs
Vice President of the European Commission

Stefan Fule

Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy

Brussels, 11 April 2011
Our Ref: B1064

Revision of the future EU-Morocco Action Plan

Dear Baroness Ashton and Commissioner Fule,

Reflecting on recent developments in North Africa, the Joint Communication on A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean of 8 March stated that *"a radically changing political landscape in the Southern Mediterranean requires a change in the EU's approach to the region – the underlying themes of differentiation, conditionality and of a partnership between our societies"*. The Communication also stated that *"closer political co-operation means advancing towards higher standards of human rights and governance based on a set of minimum benchmarks against which performance will be assessed"*. We expect these ideas to be further developed in the forthcoming new Communication on revision of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

We have previously highlighted the absence of commitments on human rights in the ENP and particularly the deficiencies in the current ENP Action Plans. Successor documents to the current Action Plans ought to contain strengthened human rights chapters with specific human rights provisions and measurable benchmarks, including where appropriate a realistic timescale for their accomplishment. The EU-Morocco Action Plan is one of the first of these to be redrafted within an advanced status with the EU, and you will recall that both the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) and Amnesty International sent you lists of recommendations for benchmarks to be included in this document, in November 2009 and February 2010. These documents are attached.

Amnesty International and the EMHRN ask you urgently to review the current draft successor to the EU-Morocco Action Plan in light of the EU's newly stated approach to the region, and ensure that the human rights provisions are significantly strengthened. We also ask you to clarify exactly how EMHRN and Amnesty International recommendations will be incorporated into this new document, in particular with regards to constitutional reform, the independence of the judiciary, women's rights, freedom of expression and economic, social and cultural rights.

The EMHRN and Amnesty International would be happy to discuss these issues in greater depth.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Nicolas J. Beger
Director, European Institutions Office
Amnesty International

Marc Schade Poulsen
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