



Mr. Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz
Minister of Labour & Social Policy
Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Brussels, 28 November 2011
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Dear Mr Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz

EPSCO meeting: Draft directive extending protection against discrimination

The Employment, Social Policy, Health & Consumer Affairs Council meeting (EPSCO) on 1 December is set to review progress on the draft directive extending protection against discrimination on grounds of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation to areas outside employment, namely to social protection, social advantage, education, and access to goods and services.

As indicated in the progress report of 15 November there remains, following more than three years' negotiations, strong resistance in the Council to adopting the Commission's proposal.

Amnesty International believes the Council's reluctance runs counter to the EU's commitments under the Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights to fight all forms of discrimination, including through legislation.

It is widely acknowledged that a new directive will fill an existing legal gap at EU level since the adoption of the 2000 Equality Directives, and that the adoption and enforcement of EU legislation has been instrumental in improving protection against discrimination for many people in Europe.

The lack of the political will to conclude negotiations undermines the work accomplished over the past decade. It sends a negative message that no further EU action is needed today, against a background of growing intolerance against minorities. The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and human rights organisations have provided overwhelming evidence of this fact to the Council.

We call on the Council to revive the political momentum for adoption of new progressive anti-discrimination EU standards as a high priority.

Yours sincerely,

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