

Andreas Mavrogiannis

Deputy Minister to the President
for European Affairs

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



European Institutions Office

Our Ref: B1364R

Dear Mr Mavrogiannis,

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S RECOMMENDATIONS TO CYPRUS PRESIDENCY: MID-TERM REVIEW

Before Cyprus's EU presidency, Amnesty International issued specific recommendations on how the presidency might best promote human rights. Now that the presidency has reached its mid-term, we wanted to share our observations on its progress to date, and highlight potential areas for improvement over the remaining months.

We appreciate the effort the presidency made to pursue negotiations on the asylum package. However, we regret some of the compromises, especially the fact that detention of minors was not precluded under the Reception Conditions Directive.

We endorse the presidency's active role in coordinating EU member state positions during this summer's UN negotiations on the Arms Trade Treaty.

Looking ahead, we encourage the presidency to show leadership and ensure meaningful consultation with civil society regarding the EU's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights. The aim of this process must be to enhance and accomplish human rights protection in Europe.

We acknowledge the presidency's priority treatment of violence against women (VAW). We urge the presidency to follow through on this commitment and ensure that the forthcoming Council conclusions on VAW make explicit reference to female genital mutilation and are drafted in close consultation with civil society. We maintain our call on Cyprus to sign and ratify the Council of Europe convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

We welcome the fact that the strategic framework on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) has been put on the agenda of the Working Party on International Public Law (COJUR) in September. We hope that the presidency, as the chair of this working group, will ensure a strong plan for improved implementation of the IHL guidelines is agreed by December.

The presidency's support for the effective implementation of the recently adopted directive on the rights of victims of crime will be crucial to the directive's future.

Finally, we are concerned at the lack of action over the eight cases of people under threat which we highlighted in our recommendations. We trust that the presidency will now use all its powers to seek justice for these individuals. We stand ready to help.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Nicolas J Beger
Director