

José Manuel Barroso
President of the European Commission

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS OFFICE

8 April 2014

Ref: B1544

Dear Mr Barroso,

Subject: Amnesty International report on racist violence against Roma

Amnesty International would like to draw your attention to our new briefing, *"We ask for justice": Europe's failure to protect Roma from racist violence*, launched today on International Roma Day (please find enclosed). The briefing reveals that discrimination, including hate motivated violence against Roma people and communities by the police, private individuals, and groups are widespread throughout the European Union (EU). It looks at emblematic cases in three countries - the Czech Republic, France and Greece - and highlights that the response of the authorities to date has been inadequate. Law enforcement agencies are failing to prevent attacks and to ensure that hate motives are properly investigated. At the same time, the existence of racist attitudes entrenched within many police forces is often denied or left unaddressed.

For its part, the EU has been reluctant to take decisive action to address hate motivated violence against Roma. For example the issue was not addressed at the European Roma Summit last week where European leaders came together to renew their commitment to end discrimination against Roma.

We are also concerned that the provisions of the Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia (2008/913/JHA) are insufficient to guarantee the thorough investigation of any alleged hate motivated crime. This is in contrast with the provisions of the EU Directive on victims' rights (2012/29/EU) which explicitly protects victims of crimes committed with a discriminatory motive.

Amnesty International calls on the EU to consider the findings from our briefing in order to strengthen its policies to combat discrimination and hate motivated violence. **In particular, we call on the European Commission to:**

- Examine further whether the implementation of the provisions of the Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA effectively ensures that racist and xenophobic motives are properly unmasked and adequately addressed; and propose new legislative and/or other policy measures to fill in the existing protection gaps
- Elaborate further on the protection and rights of victims of hate crime in the context of the ongoing exchange with member states on the transposition of Article 22 of the Directive on victims' rights.

We thank you for your attention and look forward to your response. We remain at your disposal to discuss further the issues raised in this letter and the new Amnesty International briefing.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Nicolas J. Begger
Director
Amnesty International European Institutions Office