



**Mr Donald Tusk**

President of the European Council

Rue de la Loi 175

1048 Brussels

Brussels, 14 November 2014

Ref: B1625

Dear President Tusk,

### **CALL FOR A PROACTIVE APPROACH TO HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION AND PROMOTION**

Let me begin by expressing Amnesty International's best wishes for your new role. We look forward to working with you and the European Council on human rights. We are calling on you to be a champion for human rights by speaking out against human rights violations both within the European Union (EU) and abroad.

As the President of the European Council, you play the very important role of leading the work of the European Council in setting the general political direction of the EU through its strategic guidelines. We call on you to use this leadership position to proactively protect and promote human rights. Concretely, this would mean using strategic guidelines designed for operational and legislative planning purposes not just to consolidate and implement existing EU law and policy, but also to offer a vision for the future on innovative ways to tackle human rights issues within the EU, at its borders and beyond. In particular we call on you to support our call to develop **an internal EU human rights strategy** to better respond to human rights violations and challenges within the EU. We would ask that you lend your full support to designing such a strategy.

As outlined in Amnesty International's January 2014 paper '*The future of EU policies in the area of freedom, security and justice: a human rights perspective*',<sup>i</sup> this strategy could be articulated around key objectives for EU action to:

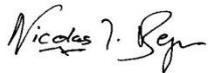
- ensure better internal-external human rights policy coherence
- act on the need for stronger EU legislation and policies to remedy gaps in human rights protection across the EU put in place more effective monitoring and enforcement of EU and member states' human rights obligations at the EU level.

Given that your mandate also entails representing the EU abroad, we would ask you to fully support the overarching human rights ambitions of the EU to '**uphold human rights in all areas of its external action without exception**', including trade, energy, migration, security and development policies. For the Council's work on external relations, this would involve using the revision of the EU Action Plan for Democracy and Human Rights, to boost member states' level of engagement with and support for the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan. Supporting the EU's human rights ambitions will also mean building on your predecessor's commitment to pro-actively raise human rights concerns, including individual cases, in your exchanges with third country leaders, and in your public statements.

We would also like you to promote a genuine partnership with civil society by supporting increased transparency of the European Council's work on human rights. We would be interested, for example, in receiving in advance information on the agendas of European Summits and summits with third countries and regional organisations. This type of increased engagement with civil society would help to ensure a holistic European Council response to key human rights concerns both in policy-making and follow-up activities.

We would very much appreciate the opportunity to discuss the above and indeed more specific issues with you in person. We will be in contact with your team to find a suitable date.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicolas J. Beger". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'N'.

Dr Nicolas J Beger

Director

European Institutions Office