

Dimitrij Rupel,
Minister of Foreign Affairs for Slovenia
Slovenian EU Council Presidency

13 May 2008
Our ref : B775

Dear Mr Rupel,

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Summit

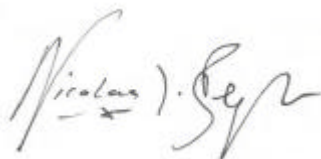
Ahead of the EU –LAC Summit in Lima on 16 May 2008, Amnesty International wishes to reaffirm the need for the European Union to use the opportunity of the forthcoming ministerial discussions to address the human rights situation in the region. In line with the commitment in the EU guidelines on human rights dialogues to raise human rights concerns at all possible opportunities with third countries, we would strongly urge the Presidency that such a high profile meeting must be used to discuss directly such concerns with the government representatives taking part in the summit. This is especially crucial since one of the two identified priorities for the summit – social cohesion – is only achievable in a framework of respect for human rights.

Over the past months, Amnesty International and other non-governmental organisations have tried to feed into the preparations to the dialogue in writing, and to organise hearings with human rights defenders for COLAT as the council formation in charge of the organisation of the summit. In its briefing submitted in November 2007 ahead of the preparations of the summit, Amnesty International called on the Slovenian Presidency to use the opportunity of the summit to press for progress in Latin American countries in the following priority areas:

- protecting Human Rights Defenders and Trade Unionists
- providing women with equal and appropriate access to healthcare
- enhancing public security for all communities
- protecting migrant and minority workers
- calling for businesses in the region to acknowledge and fulfil human rights responsibilities

To date, Amnesty International has not received any response to the briefing, or any feedback on how the EU will ensure that its commitments to human rights are placed at the forefront of its relations with Latin American countries. However, we still hope that the EU will make the most of the opportunity of the summit to fulfil this commitment and address human rights issues in the region in both formal and informal discussions. We would very much welcome any feedback on the human rights content of the summit.

Yours sincerely,



Nicolas Beger

Director

Amnesty International EU Office

Cc : Javier Solana, High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy
Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations
Riina Kionka, Personal Representative of Javier Solana for Human Rights