

23 May 2007, Brussels

Dear,

It is with pleasure that I present to you hereby the Amnesty International Report 2007.

In launching its annual assessment of human rights worldwide, Amnesty International challenges governments to reject the politics of fear and stop the downward spiral of human rights abuse. As political agendas are driven by insecurity, the result is a familiar picture of repression and gross abuse of human rights in many countries around the world. Fear of terrorism and of uncontrolled immigration as felt particularly in Western countries can all too easily trigger responses that result in basic rights being set aside.

If there is one overriding image, it is that of deep division. Inequality and intolerance breed discrimination that in its multiple manifestations cuts across many forms of human rights abuse. Europe is by no means free of these problems, and the European Union has no cause for complacency with 26 out of 27 of its member states included in this year's report.

Numbers give only a partial picture, and comparisons are dangerous. What is most important is how public authorities respond when confronted with their own deficiencies in the field of human rights. The EU and its member states face increasing scrutiny over dubious methods used to combat terrorism, and abusive practices in the fight against irregular immigration. The reaction has been utterly disappointing, with responsible governments essentially in denial of the very real problems within their own borders.

This attitude of denial risks undermining the EU's global human rights effort, and its laudable ambition to provide more effective leadership. A strong EU role externally to advance human security in the spheres of conflict prevention, crisis management and poverty eradication requires a coherent EU human rights policy that is consistent in its external and internal dimensions. Genuine security must be based on full observance of human rights, and the EU has yet to show that that is not just rhetoric when it is faced with serious challenges to security, with very real pressures of immigration, and with racism, discrimination and xenophobia on the rise.

On behalf of Amnesty International I am presenting this year's annual report in the hope that it may contribute to a serious reflection on the integrity of the EU's human rights policy. We believe that is both necessary and urgent.

Yours sincerely,



Dick Oosting
Director
Amnesty International EU Office