

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



European Institutions Office

Štefan Füle
European Commissioner
for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy

Brussels, 7 April 2011
Our Ref: B1064

**Amnesty International Report – ‘Home is more than just a roof over your head:
Roma denied adequate housing in Serbia’**

Dear Mr Füle,

We should like to draw your attention to the attached report, launched today, 7 April 2011. It documents a pattern of forced evictions of Roma people by the City of Belgrade in connection with an EU-funded construction project and analyses how the authorities failed to comply with their international human rights obligations on the right to adequate housing by failing to prohibit, and protect against, forced evictions.

Our researchers also found that resettlement for forcibly-evicted communities frequently contributes to their continued discrimination and segregation. Some evicted Roma people have been moved into segregated settlements on the outskirts of Belgrade, where they live in metal containers. Others have been forcibly displaced to southern Serbia, in violation of their right to freedom of movement and residence. Again their rights to adequate housing are being denied. The forced evictions have occurred in the context of a construction project co-funded by the European Investment Bank (EIB). The report also examines the banks' attempts to respect human rights and why they have been unsuccessful.

We call on the EU to:

- Consider the report's findings in the Commission's opinion on Serbia's application for EU membership
- Provide financial assistance under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance to help the Serbian Government provide social housing for Roma people and other vulnerable groups
- Refrain from forcibly returning Roma people to Serbia until measures to ensure their reintegration, including access to adequate housing, are in place
- Ensure that the EIB obtains effective guarantees from the Serbian Government and the City of Belgrade authorities that there will be no further forced evictions and that adequate housing and remedies will be given to those already evicted
- Ensure that the EIB does not fund projects which result in forced evictions or violate other human rights

We should naturally be happy to provide any further information you might require.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Nicolas J. Beger
Director