

Wolfgang Schüssel  
Federal Chancellor of Austria  
Austrian Presidency of the European Union

13 January 2006  
Ref: B\_517

Dear Chancellor Schüssel,

**Subject: Amnesty International's recommendations to the Austrian Presidency of the European Union**

At the start of 2006, I have pleasure in presenting to you Amnesty International's recommendations to the Austrian Presidency of the European Union, in the form of a ten-point programme.

Austria takes over the EU Presidency at a time when a major political and public preoccupation is how governments seek to provide security when faced with the threat of terrorism without eroding human rights. Fighting terrorism and irregular migration have become dominant priorities for the EU, but they have been addressed in ways that show serious human rights shortcomings. When confronted with the human rights deficit of its counter-terrorism efforts, *refoulement* or other unlawful actions by Member States, the EU response has not gone beyond customary references to fundamental values.

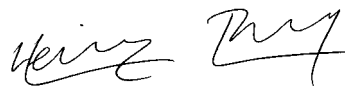
Amnesty International believes that the greatest human rights challenge for the Austrian Presidency will be to set the record straight, by reaffirming the primacy of human rights. At the end of the six months, there must be no doubt left that arbitrary arrests, secret detentions, torture and "disappearances" will not be tolerated in any way. This requires recognition that the common fight against terrorism is an area of competence and action where the EU is expected to ensure adequate protection for human rights throughout its territory.

Amnesty International presents its human rights proposals to the Austrian Presidency as an ambitious but realistic programme that takes account of a number of positive developments. It is particularly encouraging to note the intention of the Austrian and Finnish Presidencies to "work to improve the coherence and consistency of the EU's human rights policy in its internal matters as well as in external affairs". Amnesty International believes that the increasingly obvious interconnections between the internal and external dimensions, and their impact on the credibility and effectiveness of the EU's human rights policy as a whole, call for a comprehensive review of that policy.

Yours sincerely,



Dick Oosting  
Director, Amnesty International EU Office



Heinz Patzelt  
Director, Amnesty International Austria

Enclosed: *"Reaffirming the primacy of human rights – Amnesty International's ten-point programme for the Austrian Presidency of the European Union"*, AI index: IOR 61/001/2006

Cc: Mr Javier Solana, High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy; Mr Michael Matthiessen, EU HR Javier Solana's Personal Representative for Human Rights; Mr Gijs De Vries, EU Counter-terrorism Coordinator; Mr Josep Borrell, President of the European Parliament; Mr José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission; Mr Franco Frattini, Commissioner for Justice, Freedom and Security; Mr. Olli Rehn, European Commissioner for Enlargement; Ms Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations