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To the attn. of:

Mr. Petr Fiala

Prime Minister of the Czech Republic

Cc: Ambassador Edita Hrdá

Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the European Union

4 July 2022

Dear Prime Minister Fiala,

Amnesty International recommendations to the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union

As the Czech Republic has assumed the Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU), Amnesty International calls on you to ensure that human rights are at the forefront of your mandate. The Czech presidency comes at a time of increased challenges in Europe, including the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and its implications for the international human rights system, backsliding on the rule of law, the growing anti-gender movement and the discriminatory treatment of asylum seekers.

At this important moment, we welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your government to discuss our recommendations in person.

Amnesty International urges you to:

- **Lead on asylum and migration policies centred on solidarity, human rights and non-discriminatory treatment.** A common European asylum and migration system should be based on responsibility-sharing within the EU and globally; a commitment to improve and invest in adequate reception and human rights protection; and accountability for human rights abuses and violations committed by authorities against migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers. The EU's immediate protection granted to people fleeing the war in Ukraine has set a good example and requires that Member States now focus on ensuring sustainable assistance and share responsibility for the longer term needs of those displaced by the conflict. However, it has also brought in sharp relief the discriminatory double standards in response to movements of people seeking protection.
- **Put human rights at the centre of EU foreign policy:** In the face of escalating violations, aggression and war, a human rights-based foreign policy is now more crucial than ever. The Czech Presidency should lead the EU toward a foreign policy that engages more robustly on human rights, by:
 - **Prioritizing human rights in EU policy towards third countries,** including China, Cuba, India, Russia, Ukraine and the Western Balkans, and refrain from side-lining human rights concerns in efforts to cooperate on trade, energy security, digital and other global challenges.

- **Stepping up collaboration in defence of the international human rights system** and the universality of human rights by forging truly global partnerships and coalitions, including at multilateral fora.
- **Strengthening EU and member state support to Human Rights Defenders (HRDs)** through the adoption of annual Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions on HRDs.
- **Ensure concrete progress on protecting and promoting human rights and the rule of law within the EU**, in particular regarding the ongoing **Article 7 TEU proceedings**, protecting **civic space and Human Rights Defenders (HRDs)** also within the EU, supporting the adoption of an **EU-wide legislation to prevent Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation (SLAPP)**, as well as **accession to the European Convention on Human Rights** and the **Istanbul Convention** on preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence.
- **Lead on a robust EU tech regulation, including aimed at ending unlawful targeted surveillance and ensuring greater regulation of the cyber-surveillance industry, and strong fundamental rights protections against potential harms induced by Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems:** Pending robust regulation, EU member states must immediately put in place a moratorium on the sale, transfer, and use of cyber-surveillance technologies. Given the breadth and scale of the findings which emerged from the Pegasus Project, there is an urgent need to halt surveillance technology enabled activities of all states and companies, until there is a human rights-compliant regulatory framework in place.¹ Member states should also seize the opportunity to address challenges regarding the human rights impact of new technologies such as AI while ensuring strong fundamental rights safeguards under the EU AI Act.

Please find enclosed with this letter an annex providing further analysis and recommendations to the Czech Presidency.

We look forward to working closely with you and with our Czech counterparts during the Presidency and beyond. We stand ready to provide any further information required and would welcome the opportunity to meet you to discuss how the Czech Presidency can act upon the above recommendations.

Thank you in advance for your action to deliver on the EU's human rights commitments at this crucial time.

Yours sincerely,

Eve Geddie



Head of Office and Advocacy Director
European Institutions Office
Amnesty International

Linda Sokačová



Director
Amnesty International Czech Republic

¹ See Amnesty International, Briefing on Recommendations to the European Union to end unlawful targeted surveillance, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur01/4850/2021/en/>