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*To the attn. of:*

**Ulf Kristersson**

Prime Minister of Sweden

*Cc: Ambassador Lars Danielsson*

Permanent Representative of Sweden to the European Union

21 December 2022

Dear Prime Minister Kristersson,

### **Amnesty International recommendations to the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union**

As Sweden assumes 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 Swedish 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 a recrudescence of the disembarkation crisis, putting further in danger the lives of people crossing the Mediterranean.

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 shown that member states can quickly spring into action in seeking to address the needs and share responsibility for those displaced by a conflict. The EU's protection system must be open to, and effectively used for, all people seeking safety in the EU, in addition to meeting the ambition of creating a robust Union Resettlement Framework combined with other safe and legal pathways.
- **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 Swedish 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, Ethiopia, India, Iran, Russia/Ukraine and Saudi Arabia; and refrain from side-lining human

rights concerns in efforts to cooperate with third countries 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 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) proceedings** and **EU accession to the European Convention on Human Rights** and the **Istanbul Convention** on combatting violence against women and domestic violence; supporting the adoption of **strong EU-wide legislation to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence**, as well as to counteract **Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation (SLAPP)**; and protecting **civic space and HRDs** also within the EU.
- **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 spyware 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.<sup>1</sup> Member states should also seize the opportunity to address challenges regarding the human rights impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI), while ensuring strong fundamental rights safeguards under the EU AI Act. Public transparency and accountability related to the use of AI by public authorities, including for law enforcement and migration management purposes, is key to safeguarding fundamental rights of impacted people and communities.

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

We look forward to working closely with you and with our Swedish 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 Swedish 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

Anna Johansson



Director  
Amnesty International Sweden

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<sup>1</sup> See Amnesty International, *Briefing on Recommendations to the European Union to end unlawful targeted surveillance*, 7 October 2021, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur01/4850/2021/en/>