

## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL EU OFFICE PRESS RELEASE

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### **BARCELONA 10 YEARS ON: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGES EU TO LIVE UP TO HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS**

(Brussels, 24 November 2005) Ten years after the Barcelona Process was initiated, the violation of human rights continues unabated among partner countries, while the European Union is increasingly failing to live up to its own international obligations, namely in its response to terrorism and irregular migration, says Amnesty International.

In a briefing paper issued today "*Ten years of EUROMED: Time to end the human rights deficit*" (available at [www.amnesty-eu.org](http://www.amnesty-eu.org)), the organisation warns that by not making Member States respect basic international obligations, such as *non-refoulement* and the absolute prohibition of torture, the EU is losing its credibility to press human rights compliance by partner countries.

"The Mediterranean countries, rather than the EU, were generally blamed for the human rights deficit of the Barcelona process, but today it affects both sides of the partnership", said Dick Oosting, Director of Amnesty International's EU Office. "The EU must address its shortcomings not only because its own values are being undermined, but also because its credibility in addressing abuse by the other side is at stake", he added.

Amnesty International is also concerned that EU pressure on partner countries to combat terrorism and control irregular migration has led to further human rights abuses in the region. The recent tragic events at the southern European border are only one flagrant example of the shortcomings of the partnership.

Therefore, Amnesty International calls on the EU to:

- firmly include human rights on the political agenda with adequate implementation mechanisms and a clear time frame;
- unequivocally base counter-terrorism measures on principles of human rights and democracy;
- respect international standards of refugee and migrant protection in efforts to combat irregular migration;
- recognise that the shortcomings in fulfilling human rights are a shared responsibility of all partners of EUROMED.

**Full text of Amnesty International's briefing to the EU is at <http://www.amnesty-eu.org>**

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