

REACTION FROM AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL EU OFFICE
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AMNESTY CRITICIZES EU DECISION ON COLOMBIA

(Brussels, Monday 3 October 2005) Amnesty International today expressed disappointment with the decision of European Union foreign ministers to give political and financial backing to Colombia's demobilization program which the human rights organisation says will simply prolong the human rights crisis in the country.

By backing Colombia's plan - even with some reservations - the EU has effectively watered down its own official policy line by not insisting on the need for a legal framework to regulate the process of demobilization which would guarantee the right to truth, justice and reparation for the victims of Colombia's bloody conflict.

"What the EU has backed today is a plan which effectively allows for the 'recycling' of paramilitary members, some of whom are suspected of gross human rights violations. Let us not forget that 70-thousand people have died in the course of the Colombian conflict, mostly civilians, while thousands of others have simply 'disappeared'. The EU should have stood firm and sent a stronger signal to the Colombian government about what the international community expects if it is to give it political and financial backing," Dick Oosting, Director of Amnesty International's EU Office said.

For further comment/background and interviews:

Amnesty International EU Office (Brussels)

Tel: 32-2-5021499

Fax: 32-2-5025686

Email: AmnestyIntl@aieu.be

Web-site: www.amnesty-eu.org