

Tampere JHA: Efficient Cooperation with Human Rights Protection

(Brussels, 18 September 2006) As EU Justice and Home Affairs Ministers prepare to meet once again in Tampere, the site of the landmark summit that in 1999 set the political direction for developing the EU as an “Area of Freedom, Security and Justice”, Amnesty International urges the EU to make the Hague Programme, the five-year programme for closer co-operation in justice and home affairs at EU level, human rights proof.

In a briefing paper, (available at www.amnesty-eu.org) Amnesty International presents its observations on the challenges and opportunities in the area of Justice and Home Affairs from a human rights perspective.

In the field of counter-terrorism as well as that of asylum and immigration, Amnesty International once again notes that a repressive approach alone cannot bring about real solutions.

“In recent years the EU has responded to the very real threat of terrorism with knee-jerk reactions after terrorist attacks. Very little has been done to ensure that basic rights and freedoms are not damaged in the process,” says Dick Oosting, Director of Amnesty International’s EU Office.

“We see the same trend in the EU’s response to irregular immigration. All efforts are mainly focused on getting boats and security personnel to the EU’s external borders and striking deals with countries like Libya and Morocco. The rights of asylum seekers and other immigrants are seen as obstacles rather than serious obligations”, Oosting added.

Amnesty International acknowledges the recent creation of a task-force of Commissioners that includes those responsible for development and education. But the organization is disappointed that the concept of “solidarity” between Member States has been limited to sporadic financial support.

This week, as Ministers review crucial aspects to reinforce the area of Freedom, Security and Justice, Amnesty International urges the Council to ensure that their ambition to “recapture the Tampere spirit” in the cooperation of justice and home affairs is firmly grounded in human rights.