



---

Mr. José Manuel BARROSO, President of the European Commission  
Baroness Catherine ASHTON, European Commissioner for Trade  
Ms. Benita FERRERO-WALDNER, European Commissioner for External Relations  
Mr. Fredrik REINFELDT, Prime Minister, Sweden  
Mr. Carl BILDT, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sweden  
Ms. Ewa BJÖRLING, Minister of Trade, Sweden  
Ms. Gunilla CARLSSON, Minister for International Development Cooperation, Sweden  
Mr. Jan KOHOUT, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic  
Mr. Miguel Ángel MORATINOS, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Spain

Brussels, September 4, 2009

**Re: Human rights NGOs and European civil society networks call on the EU to take a strong position regarding human rights violations in Honduras**

**The undersigned human rights NGOs and civil society networks condemn the violations of human rights by the de facto government in Honduras. We ask for the EU to condemn more strongly the human rights violations by the de facto government than it has done hitherto. We also call on the EU not to recognize elections called under the de facto government, support the return of president Zelaya, maintain the suspension of the association agreement negotiations, initiate an investigation for the temporary withdrawal of benefits given to Honduras under the GSP+ framework and to effectively support human rights defenders.**

The human rights situation in Honduras is deteriorating. Since the coup d'état and the breakdown of constitutional order on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2009 there have been numerous reports of serious human rights' violations in the country. The Inter-American

Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Amnesty International, FIDH and a number of delegations of non-governmental organisations and Honduran human rights organisations such as CIPRODEH and COFADEH are among those reporting on human rights violations, including: disproportionate and excessive use of force by the police and military to repress legitimate and peaceful protests; arbitrary arrests and detentions; gender based violence against female protesters; violations of the right to freedom of opinion, expression, assembly and association; arbitrary application of curfew measures; increased restrictions on the ability of human rights defenders and media workers to move freely.

The international community, including the European Union, has unanimously condemned the coup. We welcome the decision of the EU to freeze diplomatic relations and budget support to Honduras, and the declarations condemning the coup and supporting the efforts of the OAS for a peaceful solution aiming at restoring the constitutional order by reinstating president Zelaya.

Unfortunately, the transition proposal presented by Oscar Arias, President of Costa Rica, after consultation with all parties has been rejected by the de facto government and the diplomacy of the OAS has not resulted in a solution of the situation. The political stand still and the deteriorating human rights situation in Honduras require further action by the international community. As European civil society networks and international human rights NGOs and **we call on the EU and its member states:**

1. **To strongly condemn the serious human rights violations** carried out by the illegal de facto government and support efforts to find a political solution in order to restore democracy and the respect for human rights in Honduras.
2. **To not recognize elections called under the de facto government.** Elections called under an undemocratic regime should by no means be considered democratic or legitimate. Also, the current human rights situation of serious violations of the right to freedom of opinion, expression and assembly would severely hamper a free and democratic electoral process.
3. **To support the return of the democratically elected president Zelaya** as an essential part of re-establishing constitutional order in Honduras.
4. **To maintain its decision not to continue negotiations for an EU-Central America Association Agreement** before the constitutional order in Honduras is restored and negotiations can be carried out with the Central American region as a whole. All official rounds, technical working meetings and bilateral contacts between the negotiation teams from the regions should be cancelled. We are concerned by the negative impact of the coup d'état on the process of Central American regional integration, which the Association Agreement seeks to strengthen. We do believe that if the EU decides to resume the negotiations in a bilateral or multi-bilateral fashion this would send the wrong message and be counterproductive to regional integration.

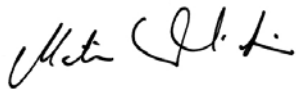
5. **To initiate an investigation for the temporary withdrawal of the tariff preferences given to Honduras under the GSP+ framework**, on the basis of serious and systematic violations of human rights laid down in the 27 conventions included in the GSP+ framework.
6. **To maintain its decision to suspend budget support** to Honduras until constitutional order is restored. Also, **individual member states supporting the Electoral Supreme Court of Honduras should be urged to freeze this support.**
7. To support human rights defenders in Honduras through the effective **implementation of the European Union guidelines on human rights defenders.**

The European Union should ensure the effective **implementation of the democratic clause** of the Framework Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Central America, which states that cooperation ties “*shall be based on respect for democratic principles and human rights*”. The respect for human rights and democracy, sustainable development and regional integration should guide EU-Central America relations. These principles are under threat due to the political situation in Honduras. We therefore urge the EU to maintain the coherent and firm position it has taken so far and take further action with the objective of restoring democracy and the respect for human rights in Honduras.

Yours sincerely,



Rob van DRIMMELEN  
General Secretary, APRODEV (Association of World Council of Churches related  
Development Organisations in Europe)



Martin WOLPOLD-BOISEN  
President, CIFCA (Copenhagen Initiative for Central America and Mexico)



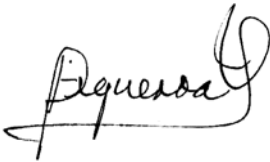
Flavio VALENTE  
General Secretary, FIAN International



Souhayr BELHASSEN,  
President, FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights)



Magda STOCZKIEWICZ  
Director, Friends of the Earth Europe



Dilcia FIGUEROA  
Coordinator, Grupo Sur

CC: Member states of the European Union

---

Contact:  
Mr Rob van DRIMMELEN  
General Secretary  
APRODEV  
Bd Charlemagne 28  
B-1000 Brussels  
Belgium  
Email: [pica@aprodev.net](mailto:pica@aprodev.net)