

## **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE**

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### **BULGARIA AND ROMANIA: EU MUST ADDRESS OUTSTANDING HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS**

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(Brussels, 19 October 2005) With the European Commission due to release its annual monitoring reports on Bulgaria and Romania on 25 October, Amnesty International calls on the European Union to keep up pressure on the two accession countries on some crucial outstanding human rights concerns.

Amnesty International welcomes the positive developments in human rights protection and promotion in both Bulgaria and Romania in the past years but says these countries still present areas of concern where individuals' rights are violated in breach of international human rights standards. The human rights organisation has regularly informed the Commission of its concerns.

In a briefing paper released today, Amnesty International highlights its concerns in both countries over problems relating to the rights of people with mental disabilities, ill-treatment by law enforcement authorities and discrimination against Roma communities.

Amnesty International invites the EU to urge the Bulgarian and Romanian governments to:

- guarantee the human rights of the mentally disabled by establishing an effective system for monitoring psychiatric institutions, including the recording of all deaths of patients and residents in such institutions;
- curb the use of excessive force by the police, by ensuring that full and impartial investigations are conducted into all cases of shootings by law enforcement officials, ensuring that the results of such investigations are made public and that perpetrators are brought to justice;
- prevent racism and discrimination against the Roma populations by effectively ensuring that discriminatory and racist actions do not go unpunished.

The briefing paper "Bulgaria and Romania: Amnesty International concerns in EU accession countries" is available on: <http://www.amnesty-eu.org>.

**For further comment/background and interviews:**

**Amnesty International EU Office (Brussels):**

**Tel: 32-2-5021499**

**Fax: 32-2-5025686**

**Email: [AmnestyIntl@aieu.be](mailto:AmnestyIntl@aieu.be)**

**Web-site: <http://www.amnesty-eu.org>**