15 November 2011

Dear Vice President Viviane Reding,

cc: *Director-General Justice, Francoise Le Bail; Head of Unit, Procedural Criminal Law, Olivier Tell*

We are writing as a group of interested NGOs to offer our continued assistance to progress the Roadmap for strengthening procedural rights of suspected or accused persons in criminal proceedings.

We understand that an Experts' Meeting was held on 23 September on the proposal for a Directive on Measure E. Previously, we have had the opportunity to participate in the Experts' Meetings, and we feel they have been very productive events for everybody involved. We believe that we bring experience and expertise in the daily practice of criminal law throughout the European Union which can be valuable to the Commission. Convening meetings with Member States, EU bodies, NGOs, and other organizations together has allowed for a dynamic cross-exchange of ideas and has reinforced the spirit of openness and transparency of the Commission. The Justice Forum is an example of this positive approach and it is vital that civil society retain access to policy forums of this kind.

The progress of the Roadmap is at the forefront of our priorities and we wish to continue to contribute to the work of the Commission on these significant issues. We hope that there will be opportunities for collaboration in a similar format and spirit as has been the case in the past where we are able to discuss openly with the Member States appropriate measures to include in procedural instruments. We will endeavor to assist and provide input in the most effective manner possible.
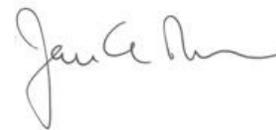
Kind Regards,

Mark Kelly
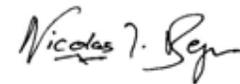Director
Irish Council for Civil Liberties

Roger Smith
Director
JUSTICE

Jago Russell
Chief Executive
Fair Trials International

James A. Goldston
Executive Director
Open Society Justice Initiative

Dr. Nicolas J. Beger
Director
Amnesty International
European Institutions Office

Professor Holger Matt
European Criminal Bar Association