

*Brussels, 19 July 2010  
D(2010)1289 – A2412*

*Dear Mr Matt,*

*Thank you very much for your letter of 29 June 2010, which I greatly appreciated.*

*First and foremost I want to pay tribute to the work your organisation has continuously undertaken in promoting the work of the European Commission in ensuring strong fair trial rights throughout the European Union.*

*I also appreciate the important effort your organisation has been devoting to developing research and promoting further knowledge about the way Member States of the European Union implement fair trial rights in their legal systems. Your first hand knowledge of the realities on the ground is an essential contribution to the preparation of good and solid proposals of the European Commission in this area.*

*As you are aware, developing strong procedural rights is a top priority of this European Commission in the area of justice. As I had the opportunity to say in my message to the recent European Criminal Bar Association Conference in Antwerp, procedural standards form a crucial building block of the mutual trust between legal systems. A strong level of procedural rights constitutes a key element to create the necessary mutual trust enabling the effective application of mutual recognition in the cooperation on criminal justice in Europe. I was therefore delighted to see the Directive on the right to interpretation and translation adopted so swiftly by the European Parliament and Council. The European Union showed that by making use of the possibilities offered by the Treaty of Lisbon, it is possible to promptly get tangible results and actually agree on the first ever Directive in the field of criminal justice.*

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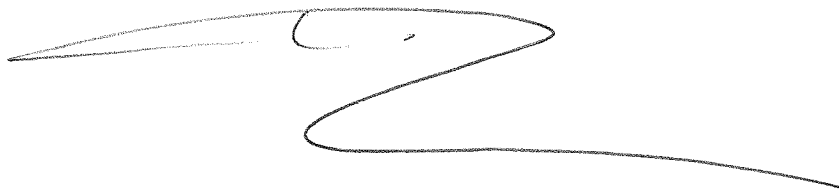
*To me, it is crucial to keep up momentum on this historic success and to continue to advance on the approximation of procedural law establishing common minimum standards for procedural rights and guarantees for individuals in criminal proceedings. That is why tomorrow – 20 July – the European Commission will adopt a proposal for a European Parliament and Council Directive on the right to information in criminal proceedings. The Commission will propose that the Directive applies from the time that a person is made aware by the competent authorities that he is suspected or accused of having committed a criminal offence until the conclusion of the proceedings, including European Arrest Warrant proceedings, which are explicitly covered.*

*I am convinced that this proposal, if adopted by the European Parliament and EU Ministers of Justice, will help to avoid miscarriages of justice and reduce the number of appeals. Authorities prosecuting a case will have to ensure that suspects are given information about their rights and when someone is arrested, they will be given this information in writing – in a Letter of Rights – drafted in simple, everyday language. It will be provided to the suspect upon arrest in all cases, whether he asks for it or not, and translated if necessary.*

*I call on you to lend your support to this proposal as yet another concrete step towards reinforcing fair trial safeguards and in strengthening mutual trust in the European Union.*

*Lastly, I look forward to continue receiving submissions from your organisation to consultations launched by my services in Directorate-General Justice in the context of the preparation of future European Commission proposals and in particular in the field of procedural rights.*

*Yours sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of fluid, connected strokes. It starts with a long horizontal line on the left, curves upwards and then downwards into a large loop, and ends with a long horizontal line extending to the right.