



THE MINISTER FOR
FOREIGN AFFAIRS

24 April 2006

Dear Olli Rehn,

Denmark is pleased that the EU will soon sign a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the Republic of Albania. This marks an important step on Albania's road towards the EU. The country has undertaken many reforms and experienced important economic, political and social progress. However, there are still many challenges ahead for Albania. I would, in this connection, like to draw your attention to the extent of domestic violence in Albania.

Amnesty International has recently published a report on violence against women in Albania. The report "Albania – Violence against Women in the Family: It's not her shame" was presented in Tirana on 30 March 2006. According to the report at least a third of all women in Albania have experienced physical violence within their families. Many more have endured psychological violence, physical and economic control.

Denmark would find it highly relevant for the Commission to include the issue of domestic violence in Albania in its political dialogue with Albania, including within the framework of the Stabilisation and Association Process. The respect for human rights is fundamental for the EU. Violence against women is an abuse of the human rights of women and girls, and should not be tolerated by any society - especially not by a country that seeks to become a member of the EU. Albania has acceded the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. However, the convention is clearly not implemented in the Albanian society.

Amnesty's report is strong evidence of a neglected human rights issue in Albania. It is my hope that the EU through its dialogue with the Albanian authorities can push for the necessary means to rectify this.

Yours sincerely,

Per Stig Møller

Mr. Olli Rehn
EU Commissioner for Enlargement