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for Business
Innovation & Skills

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Kate Allen
Director of Amnesty International UK
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Dear Kate

I am aware of the very large number of emails that have been sent to the Secretary of State by members of the public responding to Amnesty's "Torture on your Doorstep" campaign and which is evidence of the strength of feeling on this issue. You will appreciate that it is not possible for us to reply directly to each and every one of these emails but I trust that you will accept this letter as a response to the specific points that they raise about Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI) and the proposed amendments to EU Council Regulation (EC) No 1236/2005.

DSEI is commercial exhibition of defence and security equipment which takes places every two years in London. Promoting the supply of prohibited torture goods is not permitted under the UK's trade controls. Any infringement of those trade controls at DSEI, or in any other context, is a matter of serious concern for the Government. Officials from a number of Government Departments worked very closely with the organisers, Clarion Defence & Security Limited, both before and during the event to ensure compliance. I am pleased to say that, as I write, we have received no reports of any alleged breaches of the controls at this year's event.

The European Commission's proposals to amend the EU's controls on trade in goods that could be used for capital punishment and torture are currently being discussed by both the EU Council and the European Parliament. We support proposals to strengthen those controls, where the measures can be implemented and enforced effectively. We have worked closely with Amnesty and other civil society representatives on this important issue, and will continue to do so.

With best wishes

THE RT HON ANNA SOUBRY MP

Cc. Tom Davies