



**Members of the European Parliament
Intergroup on LGBTI Rights**

Faruk Kaymakci
*Ambassador Permanent
Representation of Turkey to the EU*

Concerns: Revoke Ankara's indefinite ban on LGBTI events

Brussels, 18th December 2017

Ambassador,

We are deeply disturbed by the statement by the Ankara Governor's Office of 19 November regarding the decision to ban indefinitely any event organised by LGBTI organisations, such as the projection of films, staging of theatre plays, panels, discussions and exhibitions, citing "social sensitivities and sensibilities", "public security", "protection of public health and morality" and "protection of others' rights and liberties" as grounds for the ban.

As Members of the European Parliament, we call on Turkish authorities to immediately revoke this ban and restore the right to freedom of assembly as guaranteed in the Turkish constitution.

This suppression of the freedom of assembly for LGBTI people and their allies, is completely unacceptable and is a blatant violation of international law, to which Turkey is bound. This right was upheld several times by the European Court of Human Rights (notably in *Bączkowski and others v. Poland* (2007) and *Alexeyev v. Russia* (2010)). Further the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights protects sexual orientation from discriminatory laws and practices under its Articles 2 and 26, including when it comes to freedom of expression and assembly (Art. 19 and 21).

The ban is the latest in a series of crackdowns on the LGBTI community and those who speak out in favour of their rights, and the consequences are felt beyond Ankara, as LGBTI events in other cities have been banned too. In Bursa the screening of the film "Gaci Gibi" was banned; in Istanbul the screening of "Queer Shorts" was banned by the District Governorship of Beyoğlu; also the German LGBTI Film Days Festival in Ankara was banned prior to the statement.

Furthermore, we are worried that the ban increased hate speech against the LGBTI community. Following an attack in the media, a workshop on "Gender Based Journalism" in Mardin, which was planned for November 18, had to be cancelled.

In light of the above we urge Turkish authorities first and foremost to revoke this ban and work to ensure full respect for the right to peaceful assembly of all, including LGBTI people, in line with international law and the Turkish constitution.

On behalf of the European Parliament's Intergroup on LGBTI Rights,

Terry Reintke MEP, *Co-President of the LGBTI Intergroup*

Daniele Viotti MEP, *Co-President of the LGBTI Intergroup*

Sophie in 't Veld MEP, *Vice-President of the LGBTI Intergroup*

Malin Bjork MEP, *Vice-President of the LGBTI Intergroup*

Kati Piri MEP, *European Parliament rapporteur for relations with Turkey*

Brando Benifei MEP

Beatriz Becerra MEP

Seb Dance MEP

Dennis de Jong MEP

Ana Maria Gomes MEP

Jean Lambert MEP

Maria Noichl MEP

Christine Revault d'Allonnes-Bonnefoy MEP

Elly Schlein MEP

Birgit Sippel MEP

Bart Staes MEP

Josep-Maria Terricabras MEP

Claude Turmes MEP

Monika Vana MEP

Julie Ward MEP