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**Talat Xhaferi, *President of the North Macedonian Parliament; Vladimir Gjorchev, *Chairperson of the Committee for Labour and Social Policy; Vesna Pemova, *Deputy Chairperson of the Committee for Labour and Social Policy*****

***CC: Members & Deputy Members of the Committee for Labour and Social Policy***

**Concerns: anti-discrimination law**

Brussels, 21 February 2019

Honourable President of the Parliament,

Honourable Chairman of the Committee for Labour and Social Policy,

Honourable Members of the Parliament of the Republic of North Macedonia,

In the past years, we have closely followed North Macedonia's progress in protecting the rights of LGBTI people and the many steps taken in that direction. We were pleased to hear a law on prevention and protection against discrimination inclusive of LGBTI people was drafted in May 2018, and approved by the Venice Commission and in line with EU accession standards.

We are concerned about recent statements by the Deputy Prime Minister that LGBTI people are a "disputed category" in the new draft law on protection against discrimination, casting doubt on whether this law will be adopted while remaining inclusive of LGBTI people.

All citizens deserve to have their human rights protected, and LGBTI people are no exception. International organisations, as well as the Council of Europe and the European Union all agree on this matter. Effective legal protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity is key to protecting LGBTI people against violence and discrimination, but also ensuring their full inclusion in society like any other citizens.



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In view of the above, we urge you to support the adoption of this law as soon as possible.

Yours Sincerely,

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

Daniele Viotti MEP

Terry Reintke MEP

Malin Bjork MEP

Sirpa Pietikäinen MEP

Sophie in't Veld MEP

Jean Lambert MEP

Julie Ward MEP

Dimitrios Papadimoulis MEP

David Martin MEP

Ana Gomes MEP

Monika Vana MEP

Virginie Rozière MEP

Bart Staes MEP

Ernest Urtasun MEP

Fredrick Federley MEP

Soraya Post MEP

Theresa Griffin MEP

Jose Inacio Faria MEP

Brando Benifei MEP

Hilde Vautmans MEP

Jude Kirton-Darling MEP

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Lynn Boylan MEP

Matt Carty MEP

Liadh Ni Riada MEP