

JOINT STATEMENT: IGLYO, THE EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM AND COUNCIL OF EUROPE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH

30.06.17

Over the last 25 years, the Istanbul LGBTI+ Pride Week has been celebrated during the last week of June and the Pride March has taken place on the last Sunday of June since 2003. Until 2015 it had mostly been a peaceful and joyous occasion.¹

For the third year in a row, the Istanbul LGBTI+ Pride March was banned by the local government shortly before the set date² and participants were subjected to violence from police in the form of teargas, rubber bullets, arbitrary and discriminatory detentions. A board member of IGLYO was at the scene.³

This year the reasons stated by the local government for the ban were that it “evidently, received very serious reactions from different segments of society” and that “the march that is being organized will not be allowed for the safety of our citizens [...] Participants, and tourists [...] and in regards to public order, a meeting and demonstration march will not be allowed on the mentioned day, before or after”.

¹ The local government have claimed that the application for the march 2017 wasn't made properly, but

² In 2015 the ban of the march was announced moments before it was supposed to commence with police attacking celebrating protesters to dispense them from the scene. In 2016 the Trans Pride March and LGBTI+ Pride March was banned 17th June 2017 and the same year the Ankara IDAHOT event was banned hours before by delivery of the decision in the middle of the night. In 2017 the ban of LGBTI+ Pride March was announced only one day beforehand. See also on Trans Pride 2016 [violations: http://kaosgl.org/page.php?id=21942](http://kaosgl.org/page.php?id=21942)

³ <http://www.iglyo.com/a-pride-in-istanbul/>

LGBTI+ Pride celebrators gathered at the Taksim Square in Istanbul and defied the ban in exercise of their rights. They were met by police in riot gear who fired [rubber bullets](#), teargas and 28 protestors were detained. [The Guardian](#) reported that the heavy police presence outnumbered the activists. This is the same Police force that, according to the local government's ban, was not able to protect the protesters.

The detained protesters were released the same day around midnight and there is information that the government is planning to prosecute the detained protesters on charges of *obstructing a police officer* and *State of emergency issues*. Recently, the 60th Criminal Court of Istanbul (Çağlayan Adliyesi) acquitted 13 persons charged with the same offences at Trans Pride in 2016, on the basis that they had the right to protest without obtaining a prior permission. The nationalist right-wing groups opposing LGBTI+ Pride march were present at this year's march and the ones of them that were arrested were released immediately and, in contrast to the Pride participants, were not subjected to any questions about their identity. These right-wing groups and the newspapers constantly targeting LGBT+ persons are, as a matter of fact, given a free pass to spread hatred.

IGLYO, the European Youth Forum and Council of Europe Advisory Council on Youth believe firmly that it is the responsibility of the government, police and other authorities to safeguard the human rights of all persons and their right to exercise them. By banning the marches and using violence towards participants the state is in violation of freedom of assembly, association and expression. Hate from some "segments of society" towards LGBTQI people can never be made an excuse to curb our right to organise or participate in public gatherings. By banning Pride, the local government has discriminated against a vulnerable and targeted group and denied them their fundamental human rights.

IGLYO, the European Youth Forum and Council of Europe Advisory Council on Youth *condem* the continued violations of human rights of LGBTQI persons in Turkey and, in accordance with the [Resolution on the restrictive measures taken on the freedom of expression, assembly and association towards LGBTQI persons and organisations in Turkey](#) adopted by the General Assembly of the European Youth Forum in April 2017, supported by the Council of Europe Advisory Council on Youth, reaffirm our;

- **Support** for the LGBTQI organisations in Turkey, specifically youth organisations, in their work towards equality and human rights for all;
- **Support for** the development of a plan to adopt a legal framework for the protection of LGBTI people and to prevent homophobic and transphobic hate crimes and discrimination;
- **Commitment** to continue following the situation for LGBTQI youth in Turkey, and to address the current situation and any possible future violations of LGBTQI young person's human rights in Turkey;
- **Recognise** that LGBTQI+ discrimination is a violation of human rights law and therefore a holistic approach to human rights enforcement and education should be adopted. The urgency of law enforcement having the adequate tools and education needed to deal with hate crimes;
- **Appeal** to the Council of Europe, the EU, UN and other international organisations and institutions to include LGBTQI related issues more extensively into their policy-making and implementation. Specifically, by having more contact with LGBTQI organisations in Turkey;
- **Urge** the Council of Europe, other European and international organisations to ensure full inclusion of representatives of LGBTQI organisations and movements in Turkey and independent actors into a dialogue on shaping agendas and programmes on LGBTQI youth related issues;
- **Urge** the Council of Europe, the EU, UN and other European and international organisations and institutions to foster democratic values, in particular in relation to LGBTQI young persons, as well as a responsible attitude towards international treaties, respect for civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of young people in Turkey;
- **Urge** the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Unit within the Council of Europe to monitor the situation in Turkey as well as to deploy all tools necessary in order to encourage the protection of LGBTQI+ persons within the region
- **Urge** the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to address the Government of Turkey with deep concerns over the abuse of rights of LGBTQI people in Turkey.

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NOTES TO EDITORS ABOUT THE EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM



The European Youth Forum is the platform of youth organisations in Europe. Independent, democratic, youth-led, it represents 104 National Youth Councils and international youth organisations from across the continent. The Forum works to empower young people to participate actively in society to improve their own lives, by representing and advocating their needs and interests and those of their organisations towards the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations.

For more information, visit www.youthforum.org

NOTES TO EDITORS ABOUT IGLYO



The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Youth & Student Organisation (IGLYO) is a pan European network, working with over 95 LGBTQI youth and student organisations. It is run for and by young people.

For more information, visit <http://www.iglyo.com/>

NOTES TO EDITORS ABOUT COUNCIL OF EUROPE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH



The Council of Europe Advisory Council on Youth is made up of 30 representatives from youth NGOs and networks who provide opinions and input on all youth sector activities. It also ensures that young people are involved in other activities of the Council of Europe.

For more information, visit <https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/advisory-council-on-youth>