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Turkish authorities intensify ban on exercise of freedom of assembly by LGBTI people

Written declaration No. 619

This written declaration does not reflect the position of the Assembly; only of those members that have signed it. It will not be considered further by the Assembly.

In recent months the Turkish authorities have banned four freedom of assembly events in support of the rights of LGBTI people in Ankara, Izmir and Istanbul. In the case of events in Istanbul on 19 and 26 June the organisers' attempts to make statements in public to the press following the bans were met with a violent response by the police, including rubber bullets, tear gas and arrests.

The authorities have justified the bans on various grounds, particularly security and "social sensibilities". In some cases the bans were preceded by homophobic and transphobic hate speech by extremist groups, to which the authorities have failed to respond either through public repudiation or legal action.

These developments follow the banning and violent suppression of the 2015 Istanbul Pride march. Prior to that event successful Pride marches had been held peacefully in the city for many years.

We consider these bans a serious violation of the right to freedom of assembly. LGBTI people should have the freedom to march and spread the message of equality, tolerance and non-discrimination without fear of suppression by the authorities. We call on the Turkish authorities to protect, not ban, Pride marches.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

GUNNARSSON Jonas, Sweden, SOC
ÅBERG Boriana, Sweden, EPP/CD
ANDERSON Donald, United Kingdom, SOC
BİLGEHAN Gülsün, Turkey, SOC
BILLSTRÖM Tobias, Sweden, EPP/CD
BONET Sílvia Eloïsa, Andorra, SOC
BRASSEUR Anne, Luxembourg, ALDE
BRUYN Piet, De, Belgium, NR
CENTEMERO Elena, Italy, EPP/CD
CEPEDA José, Spain, SOC
CILEVIČS Boriss, Latvia, SOC
DESTEXHE Alain, Belgium, ALDE
EFSTATHIOU Constantinos, Cyprus, SOC
FIALA Doris, Switzerland, ALDE
FOULKES George, United Kingdom, SOC
FRIDEZ Pierre-Alain, Switzerland, SOC
GHASEMI Tina, Sweden, EPP/CD
GUTIÉRREZ Antonio, Spain, SOC
HIGGINS Alice-Mary, Ireland, NR
HUOVINEN Susanna, Finland, SOC
JANSSON Eva-Lena, Sweden, SOC
JENSEN Mogens, Denmark, SOC
JOHNSSON FORNARVE Lotta, Sweden, UEL
KARLSSON Niklas, Sweden, SOC
KOX Tiny, Netherlands, UEL
LUNDGREN Kerstin, Sweden, ALDE
MAELEN Dirk, Van der, Belgium, SOC
MAURY PASQUIER Liliane, Switzerland, SOC
MEALE Alan, United Kingdom, SOC
MESTERHÁZY Attila, Hungary, SOC
OHLSSON Carina, Sweden, SOC
SHARMA Virendra, United Kingdom, SOC
SPADONI Maria Edera, Italy, NR
STRIK Tineke, Netherlands, SOC
SUTTER Petra, De, Belgium, SOC
TORNARE Manuel, Switzerland, SOC
XUCLÀ Jordi, Spain, ALDE

Total = 37

1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: Representatives not belonging to a Political Group