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13 October 2016

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

**Written declaration No. 619**

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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.

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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<sup>1</sup>:

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

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Total = 37

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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