



Annual Review

of the Human Rights Situation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex
People in Cyprus covering the period of January to December 2018

Cyprus

Bias-motivated speech

Homophobic speech by the Archbishop, the head of the Cypriot church, was reported by civil society back in 2016. Even though the Ombudsman established that it was indeed hate speech, the attorney general has taken no action to hold the Archbishop responsible. On December 14, at a police conference “The ECHR and its effect on the legal order”, Accept - LGBTI Cyprus raised the issue again, asking the president of the Supreme Court whether the Law against discrimination and enforcement of justice (2013) did not apply to the Archbishop. The Supreme Court president responded: “No one is above the law”. However, there is still no public statement from the attorney general.

Bias-motivated violence

Transphobic assaults on trans women or their property were recorded and reported to the police in July in the coastal cities of Limassol and Paphos. No attacks were identified and recorded in the Northern part of the island.

Data collection

A new online platform for anonymous reporting of homophobic and transphobic assaults was launched by Accept - LGBTI Cyprus in 2018.

Equality and non-discrimination

New rainbow meetings were started in Geroskipou this year. Rainbow Meetings are run by Accept - LGBTI Cyprus and attended by LGBTI people, family members and allies. Queer Cyprus Association and Accept - LGBTI Cyprus also hold Rainbow Meetings together in English each month.

Freedom of assembly

For the third time, the 17th of May Organisation Committee of over ten NGOs gathered on the occasion of IDAHOBIT and painted rainbows over northern Cyprus. This year's march in north Nicosia ran from the Dereboyu Suitex to Uray street and was organised under the slogan “Neither my fight, nor my love is over”. After the march, the Committee urged the authorities to punish homophobic and transphobic acts and called for speedy legal and social reforms:

“We support the need for radical changes which accept diversity in family, health, labor and education policies; reminding that laws can only be efficient if they resonate with the society.”

17th of May Organisation Committee

The Cyprus Pride 2018 march in Nicosia took place on 3 June for the 5th time and focused on legal gender recognition. The event was once again placed under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Cyprus and the Mayor of Nicosia and was supported by the Cyprus police. For the first time, the Government of Cyprus financially supported the event, the first time it offered financial support to an LGBTI organisation.

Additionally, for the first time, buses were available for a small fee for those who wanted to join from Paphos. Paphos activists also organised parallel events to mark Pride Days.

Health

NGO Accept - LGBTI Cyprus monitored, supported and raised awareness about the demeaning experience of a local trans man in August 2018, whilst visiting the Larnaca general hospital to secure a testosterone shot. The attending nurse was ignorant of trans healthcare, subjecting the person to intrusive and humiliating questioning before administering the shot. Following the man's written complaint to the hospital authorities and Accept's support and propagation of his letter to high-level allies, hospital authorities issued a formal apology, pledging to take measures to prevent similar conduct.

Legal gender recognition

Legal gender recognition was the main theme of this year's Cyprus Pride March in Nicosia. Activists are awaiting the finalisation of the country's legal gender recognition reform for years, cooperating with international NGOs and the Council of Europe.

Participation in public, cultural and political life

In June, Costas Gavrielides, NGO Accept - LGBTI Cyprus president, was appointed as an adviser to the President of the Republic of Cyprus for promoting multiculturalism, acceptance and respect for diversity. Part of his tasks is the creation of a national committee to promote multiculturalism, acceptance and respect for diversity. The committee will also serve to combat prejudice, homophobia and transphobia.

Police and law enforcement

Incidences of homophobic and/or transphobic hate speech by police and law enforcement agencies were reported to QCA's Solidarity Line. However, no official charges or complaints were made.

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