

PRESS RELEASE

01 December 2017



ACCEPT – LGBT CYPRUS MET WITH CYPRUS PRESIDENT NICOS ANASTASIADES

A delegation from Accept – LGBT Cyprus met on Thursday, November 30th with the President of Cyprus Nicos Anastasiades to discuss the difficulties faced by the LGBTI people in Cyprus today. On behalf of the Government, the meeting was also attended by the Minister of Justice Ionas Nicolaou. On behalf of the Council of Europe the meeting was attended by the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) Stella Kyriakidou, the International Expert on Gender Identity Silvan Agius, the Vice Rector for Faculty and Research of the University of Nicosia and Chairman of the Bioethics Committee of Cyprus Constantin Phellas and the Associate Professor of International Law and Human Rights at the University of Cyprus, Aristotelis Constantinides.

The main topic of discussion during the meeting was the need to resolve key problems relating mainly to the trans and intersex communities in Cyprus. On behalf of the organisation, the President of Accept-LGBT Cyprus, Costas Gavrielides, presented a preliminary draft Bill on Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics which is currently being prepared by Cypriot and International lawyers and experts with the active support of the Council of Europe. The preparation of the draft bill is expected to be completed by the end of the month.

On behalf of the Government President Anastasiades welcomed the actions undertaken for the matter, stating that there is a need to find solutions to problems faced by trans and intersex people and promised that the Government will study the draft bill once it is finalised, and will be bringing this to the House of Representatives soon after the election for a vote.

President Anastasiades agreed with the position of the organisation that there is a need for the setup of a National Committee for LGBTI Matters and requested from the organisation to send its proposal on how it believes this should be created, with the promise that this will be done following the elections.

Costas Gavrielides also referred to the need to change the law criminalising homophobic and transphobic rhetoric after it emerged that this, as it stands, does not work correctly. He noted that this is evident following the Attorney General's refusal to allow an inquiry to examine the recent homophobic comments made by Cyprus' Archbishop Chrysostomos, as well as the lack of any enquiries regarding homophobic or transphobic rhetoric in the last 2 years.

At the same time, Gavrielides, referred to the need to include to the existing Combatting Certain Forms and Expressions of Racism and Xenophobia Act of 2011 (134 (I)/2011) additional categories such as sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics as well as



attributes such as disability, language and citizenship. President Anastasiades agreed on the need for modernisation the current law and asked the organisation to send its proposals in writing.

The organisation also commented on the discrimination faced by LGBTI in the workplace and the need for information and education for both employers and workers and especially the need for LGBTI workers to be informed about their rights. Reference was also made to a recent meeting between the organisation and the Director General of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, Mr Andreas Assiotis regarding this.

A short discussion was also held about issues such as adoption by same-sex couples, surrogate motherhood and medically assisted reproduction for women couples, with President Anastasiades informing that the Government was ready to discuss problems that have been arising from the above topics in time, in an open dialogue.

Finally, acknowledging the work that Accept has been doing in recent years for the LGBTI community and its role in defending the rights of many Cypriots, President Anastasiades, promised economic support to the organisation to assist the work it carries out.

Accept – LGBT Cyprus

