

Closing of Lambda Istanbul – another human rights violation in Turkey

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On the 29th of May, Lambda Istanbul, the biggest LGBTQ rights movement in Turkey, was closed due to a decision made by the Turkish courts. The first attempt to close Lambda Istanbul was based on the grounds that the organisation was acting against the laws and moral standards. As the court could not reach a decision on these grounds, they ruled to close the organisation on procedural grounds instead. This court ruling is the latest in a series of legal measures to target organisations that defend human rights in Turkey.

When it comes to human rights, and in particular, the human rights of LGBTQ people in Turkey, the Islamists and nationalists join forces to exclude these marginalised groups from society. In this area Islamists and nationalists have found common ground, to deprive LGBTQ people their basic human rights, and to undermine the human rights of the Turkish population. It is sad to see that there is a backwards movement in relation to human rights in Turkey – away from implementing and respecting human rights. This is an immediate response to the poor reactions to Turkey's accession to the EU, from existing member states and from the European Commission. Due to the slowly proceeding and lack of positive feedback in relation to accession negotiations, most Turkish political parties and many Turkish people are losing the bond that they once felt with the EU. This is regrettable as it would be a shame to see Turkey on the border of the EU.

We, Young European Greens, urge the EU to take the accession of Turkey seriously, and not to let the Turkish people down on their path to becoming European citizens. It has been shown that this is what they want, and that their voice should be heard over the anti-European forces in the Turkish Parliament.

We also hope that the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights will decide that the closure of Lambda Istanbul is a contravention of the Convention on Human Rights, and that the Turkish court's decision should be considered void, as there are no grounds for the organisation's closure.

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