

European Action Week Against Racism – “Diversity Festival”

As part of European Action Week Against Racism, the European Commission will support a “Diversity Festival” on Thursday, 21 March 2019 at Bedestan, Nicosia from 15:00 to 17:00. The event aims to bring together various cultural groups in order to celebrate cultural diversity within the Turkish Cypriot community. The French Cultural Association, German Cultural Association, Akova Women’s Association, Palestinian Students’ Group, African Students’ Group, East & South East Cultural Association, Cyprus Folkdance Group (TUFAD), OneWorship, Turkish Cypriot Journalists’ Association, Queer Cyprus, and Universal Patient Rights Association will host information tables where food of different cultures will also be served. In addition to this, there will be music and dance performances by different cultural groups.

People across the EU continue to be targeted by racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance because of their race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation or gender identity, disability, social status or other characteristics. The EU rejects and condemns all forms of racism and intolerance, as they are incompatible with the values and principles upon which the EU is founded. A broad set of rules exist at the EU level which contribute to better tackling different forms and manifestations of racism and intolerance, in particular the Framework Decision on combating certain forms of expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law.

Between 16-24 March, the European Action Week Against Racism will be marked by activities all around Europe to combat racism and prejudice, bringing people with diverse backgrounds and stories face to face. Coordinated by UNITED for Intercultural Action, the pan-European network of antiracist NGOs, this annual campaign sees civil society groups, educational institutions and city governments come together to protest against racism and stand up for inclusive European societies.

As part of the EU Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community many projects addressing discrimination and human rights have been supported. This includes Youthopia: Empowering young Cypriots to promote and protect their rights by MAGEM, the Cypriot Intangible Cultural Heritage project by the Nicosia Folklore Association, Human Rights for All by Refugee Rights Association, and Unspoken: Creating Dialogue on LGBTI Rights in the Turkish Cypriot Community by Cyprus Community Media Centre Co. and Queer Cyprus. In December 2018 the European Commission signed contracts in the amount of €2.3 million with 8 civil society organisations as part of Civil Society in Action VI Grant Scheme with an aim to strengthen their capacities and impact in promoting and defending democracy, fundamental rights and freedoms, cultural diversity and reconciliation. The projects will address the prevention of domestic violence against women and children, LGBTI+ rights, and strengthening journalists’ and media institutions’ capacity to promote press freedom and fundamental human rights.

Background:

Relevant pieces of EU legislation to combat racism, xenophobia and other kinds of intolerance include:

- legislation in the area of [non-discrimination](#), in particular the Directive prohibiting discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin in several walks of life, and the [Employment Equality Directive](#) prohibiting discrimination on several grounds in the field of employment
- the [Audiovisual Media Services Directive](#), banning incitement to hatred in audiovisual media services and the promotion of discrimination in audiovisual commercial communications
- legislation prohibiting discrimination during border controls

Building on the existing legal framework, the EU has introduced and initiated a broad range of measures to better prevent and combat racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. **Sources:** https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/justice-and-fundamental-rights/discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/combating-racism-and-xenophobia_en



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