



**Marina YANNAKOUDAKIS**

Conservatives, London Region

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, Member

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

2nd February 2012

Dr. Derviş Eroğlu  
Şehit Selahattin Sonat Sok.  
Nicosia  
Northern part of Cyprus  
Via Mersin 10

Dear Dr. Eroğlu

Thank you for your letter of 8 December 2011 and for informing me of the progress towards the repeal of the parts of the Criminal Code, Chapter 154 which criminalise homosexuality.

I was pleased to hear that a bill was before the assembly and, as per your promise to me in October, that you were ready to sign the repeal into law.

However, I was disappointed to learn of the recent arrest of two men on 29 January 2012 in the Central Prison in Nicosia.

As the proposal to repeal the relevant parts of the criminal code is before the assembly, I would kindly request for you to consider an immediate moratorium on arrests under Section 171 of Chapter 154. I also ask you to drop the charges on the men arrested on 29 January. I have been informed that the two men are currently being held in punishment cells. If this is the case, I call on you to release them from these cells without delay.

I also ask you to fast track any draft legislation to repeal the ban on homosexuality to avoid any reoccurrences of these miscarriages of justice.

I am also concerned about the manner in which these arrests were reported in the newspaper 'Kıbrıs'. The newspaper released the names and even pictures of the two men concerned and reported the arrest in an extremely derogatory tone. I call on you not only to change the law, but to ensure that homophobia is not tolerated in the Turkish-language media. All Cypriot adults deserve the right to engage in consensual sex – be it with the same or different gender – without fear of punishment or pillory.

I look forward to hearing from you with an update on the situation.

Yours sincerely

Marina Yannakoudakis MEP