



EURO-MEDITERRANEAN HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK
RÉSEAU EURO-MÉDITERRANÉEN DES DROITS DE L'HOMME
الشبكة الأوروبية - المتوسطية لحقوق الإنسان



PICUM

PLATFORM FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON
UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS



European Network Against Racism
Réseau européen contre le racisme
Europäisches Netz gegen Rassismus

migreurop

- JOINT STATEMENT - HARASSMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AND BREACH OF MIGRANTS' RIGHTS IN CYPRUS MUST STOP

Since May 2011, when he was first informed, Doros Polycarpou, Executive Director of KISA, faces criminal charges following the events at the Rainbow Festival on 5 November 2010 in Larnaca. More than a year after the attacks by far-right and nationalist groups on festival goers, no independent investigation has been carried out and the lengthy legal proceedings remains dubious to an ever greater number of European and international organisations.

Exchanges of letters and meetings with Cypriot officials did not ease the concerns of the observation mission sent to Cyprus twice as to the biased nature of the evidence brought to the Attorney General and to the unfairness of the trial as a whole¹. The UN Human Rights Council is currently asking the government to account for this criminalisation.

We believe this trial is yet another hostile attempt undertaken to thwart KISA's action in the defense of migrants' rights which has confirmed Cyprus authorities' failure to fully respect human rights and EU law².

The harassment faced by KISA is all the more worrying as it has strongly affected the organisation's capacity to provide support to migrants whose situation is critical: to date, migrants can hardly access their rights in Cyprus (hardly any access to health care; absence of legal remedy in asylum procedures; illegal deprivation of liberty; overt exploitation of migrant workers; deportation to countries at risk, to quote but a few).

As Europe is witnessing a worrying trend of xenophobia and extreme nationalism, **it is crucial that the Cypriot authorities act responsibly in addressing and sanction racism and its inherent violence.** It is also of the utmost importance that, in the view of the upcoming Common European Asylum System, **measures are urgently taken for Cyprus to abide by EU and international standards, especially by amending its immigration and asylum law** and abandon administrative practices violating human rights.

In the prospect of Cyprus's presidency of the EU Council in July 2012, we, the undersigned organisations and individuals, express grave concern regarding the situation of human rights defenders and of migrants in Cyprus and call on the authorities to:

- Drop all charges against Doros Polycarpou;
- Terminate KISA's criminalisation;
- Guarantee migrants access to their rights as enshrined in EU law;
- To ensure that adequate resources and conditions are sustained to NGOs in Cyprus that support migrants in accessing their fundamental rights

¹ See attached press releases by the inter-organisational delegation on [21-22 July](#) and on [12-13 December 2011](#)

² See attached the reports y the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders [2010](#) and [2011](#) ;
Joint statements in support of KISA by [Migreurop](#) and [Frontline Defenders](#)