



## European network of legal experts in gender equality and non-discrimination

### NEWS REPORT

<b>Country:</b>	Turkey
<b>Title:</b>	Local governments impose a blanket ban on LGBT groups across the country
<b>Date:</b>	18 December 2017
<b>Expert:</b>	Dilek Kurban
<b>Issue at stake:</b>	Freedoms of assembly and association of LGBTs in Turkey
<b>Ground of discrimination:</b>	Sexual orientation, multiple discrimination
<b>Source:</b>	Policy development
<b>Field:</b>	Other (fundamental rights- freedom of assembly)
<b>Applicable law:</b>	Article 11(c) of Law of Provincial Administration (no. 5442), Article 17 of Law on Meetings and Demonstrations (no. 2911), Article 11(f) of the State of Emergency Law

### Content

**Policy development:** On 19 November 2017, after having banned a German gay film festival on 15 November on grounds of “public security”, the governor of Turkey’s capital Ankara imposed a blanket and indefinite ban on all public events related to LGBT issues or organized by LGBT groups on the ground that they “could provoke hatred and hostility.” In a written statement issued on its website, Ankara governor Mehmet Kiliclar justified the ban on grounds of “public security”, “social sensitivities”, “the protection of public health and morality” and the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.<sup>1</sup>

Thereafter, on 25 November, the governorship of the Beyoglu district in Istanbul banned the screening of a film related to LGBT issues, citing public security, prevention of crime, and the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. Similar bans or obstructions of LGBT events have since followed in several cities across Turkey.

Several LGBT associations and groups filed lawsuits, asking courts to stay the execution of the Ankara governorship’s ban. The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights has called on the Ankara governor to “immediately” reverse the ban, which it called “a blatant human rights violation.”

**Key points of analysis:** While the Ankara governor’s ban is partially based on the emergency rule declared by the government soon after the failed coup attempt on 15 July 2016 and has been in effect since, it follows a trend pre-dating the coup attempt and the declaration of emergency. In recent years, the authorities have been arbitrarily restricting the LGBT individuals and associations from exercising their constitutionally

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<sup>1</sup> For the official statement of Ankara governorship in Turkish, see <http://www.ankara.gov.tr/yasaklama-kararina-iliskin-basin-duyurusu-19112017>.

protected rights and freedoms. In the past three years, the governorship of Istanbul banned the annual Gay Pride Festival and Parade. In Turkey, provincial and district governors are appointed by the central government, which has been run by the Justice and Development Party since late 2002.