

# Open Letter of support for KISA

Nicosia, Hanover, 18.09. 2011

With this letter of support we, the German-Cypriot Youth Exchange Programme, want to call for solidarity with *KISA – Action for Equality, Support, Antiracism* and express our concern about their treatment in the Republic of Cyprus.

## Who we are

The **German-Cypriot Youth Exchange Programme** was initialized by the Hanover branch of the Socialist Youth of Germany – The Falcons (SJD – Die Falken) in 2007. The core Cypriot partners are the Socio-political Studies Foundation (IKME) in the southern part of the island and the Socio-political Studies Foundation (BILBAN) from the northern part. The aim is to bring young people from Cyprus and Germany together within the framework of tri-communal projects. Every year an exchange takes place either in Germany or in Cyprus alternately. We want to strengthen the ties between the German and Cypriot partner organisations and create friendships between the participants. At the same time, we see our project as a contribution to the development of the European Union on the civil society level.

## Who is KISA

**KISA – Action for Equality, Support, Antiracism** is a non-governmental organisation (NGO), established in 1998 in Cyprus. KISA's overall long-term objective is the creation of a multicultural society, where there is equality of all persons, irrespective of nationality, race or ethnic origin, colour, creed, gender, sexual or any other orientation, background or characteristic. Further more, KISA is member of the European Network Against Racism (ENAR).

During our exchange programme in Cyprus from 22.07. - 02.08.2011 we met KISA, conducted workshops together about legal and social problems of immigrants and asylum seekers in the Republic of Cyprus. We also learnt more about the recent **criminalisation** of KISA and the court case against KISA director Doros Polycarpou for '*rioting*' and '*participating in an illegal assembly*'. With '*illegal assembly*' is meant the anti-racist Rainbow Festival on 05. November 2010, organised every year by KISA.

This court case turns the victims into perpetrators!

Instead of persecuting those fascists that attacked the Rainbow Festival in Larnaca the authorities brought the victims before the court.

## **Concerns and Demands**

We are deeply concerned about the rising of extreme right-wing and fascist activities in the Republic of Cyprus.

We are deeply concerned about the recent criminalisation of KISA by authorities of an European Union member state.

We call on the authorities in the Republic of Cyprus to withdraw discrimination and unjustified actions against a non-governmental organisation that advocates democracy and equal social and political rights for discriminated persons and groups in society.

We call on the authorities in the Republic of Cyprus to understand that KISA's work and that of other progressive non-governmental organisations are strengthening democratic structures within the civil society.

We call on the authorities in the Republic of Cyprus not to discriminate but to support KISA's work politically and financially. KISA should be regarded as a partner in dealing with and eliminating the ignorance and legal and social discrimination that immigrants and asylum seekers are facing in the Republic of Cyprus.

We call on the people in the Republic of Cyprus to heighten attention about legal and social discrimination in society and put pressure on the authorities not to criminalise democratic advocacy.

We call on every progressive organisations throughout the European Union to support KISA against discrimination and criminalisation by the authorities of the Republic of Cyprus.

On behalf of the group



Coskun Tözen, project coordinator

contact:

SJD – Die Falken, Bezirksverband Hannover  
c/o German-Cypriot Youth Exchange Programme  
Wilhelm-Busch-Str. 12  
30167 Hannover  
Germany  
Phone: +49(0)511 62 82 97/98  
E-mail: [coskun.toezen@falken-hannover.de](mailto:coskun.toezen@falken-hannover.de)