



**Subject: “The GTSA’s stance on Athens Pride 2016”.**

Athens, April 12

The GTSA (G.T.S.A), a recognized ngo for the support of the rights of the trans community, after all that has transpired the last years and after the last public announcement of Athens Pride, emphasizes the following:

Since 2012, the GTSA has publicly stated its deepest concern over the way the festival is being conducted, while a large part of it is under prosecution and the answer was “we’re conferring it”.

Furthermore, at the 2014 festival, many intense instances of transphobic remarks, which confirmed all our concerns, caused a reaction of the greatest part of the trans and overall the LGBTQI community.

All the aforementioned lead to the non-participation and the differentiation of many LGBTQI organizations from the event of Athens Pride of 2015, including the GTSA, with our announcements in January and February 2015, relating to all transphobic comments which had previously occurred, by the way it was organized, their ignorance of the position of the trans community and the opacity in which the organizing committee acts upon.

It is worth mentioning that right before the 2015 event, in an update on behalf of the organization committee, it was mentioned that the existing committee will dismantle and a new one will be formed, also mentioning that a conversation will be held with the whole community 15 days after the event.

This never occurred, instead, 5 months later, in November, despite the fact that no conversation took place, the organizations of the community received a letter, ignoring prior events, called for a typical “description of position”, evidence of how the organization committee sees such a monumental event of the community. No conversations were held, nor did anything they had promised in June ever realized.

It came also to our understanding that the following was stated during last year’s festival: “we don’t care, no problem they didn’t show up”.

All the above, occurred during this time period as no conversation ever took place, and nothing had changed as the members of the committee who had either expressed or supported transphobic statements, are still there.

In addition, there were announcements in which the truth had been distorted and organizations were falsely mentioned to have taken part, but in reality they never were present in the meetings of Athens Pride. On the contrary, they had stated their opposition to the procedure and the whole philosophy the organizing committee followed, as well as other organizations which wanted to wash Athens Pride away.

What is more, the truth was distorted, concerning how the events transpired during the 2014 period, during which, intense transphobic speech was expressed on behalf of the committee.

In addition to these former statements, also falsely stated, was the fact that due to Athens Pride, organizations of the LGBTQI community were created. This showed the arrogance and the intent of subduing these organizations.

It was mentioned that “a political group” had been created in Athens Pride, which acts in Athens Pride itself, and acts non transparently while also presenting unreal facts.

During the past period, it was stated falsely that Athens Pride is cooperating with the trans community, while in reality this only concerned a small group, and the latest announcement of the committee proved that this is the goal of Pride and the group which decided to collaborate with it: the subduing of the trans community, beyond the GTSA,

which has effortlessly been working on both political and specific personal discrimination issues and violence which trans individuals face.

Finally, as for the motto chosen: It had a specific context, during the period it was written and has nothing to do with the political assertions of the trans community. It stands as separate issues and is acknowledged ambiguously, just as that of the organizing committee of Athens Pride, with no relation to the demand of legal recognition of gender identity. Beyond all the ambivalent questions (born – becoming), the answer is always: I AM TRANS. And that is where legal recognition comes to answer: In a real situation, in a true status, which is the basis upon the discrimination the trans community suffers from: I AM TRANS, I suffer from discrimination due to the misidentification of the documents with the true gender identity, therefore since I AM, it must be recognized. The same of course applies to all people who identify themselves as non binary, because THEY ARE (since this is how they self-identify as), this status must be recognized with a third or blank input, in the legislation for the legal recognition of gender identity, as it has already occurred in three countries in Europe and as the Council of Europe recommends. The position on a political level which has to do with the legal recognition is I AM, exactly why it leads to the expected political result, for which the organizing committee has no interest in, with the exception of covering and washing away everything that has happened with an ostensible interest, supposedly for trans individuals.

After all the aforementioned events, the GTSA, states it will have nothing to do with the festival which does not make us proud, and of course we will not participate, as since 2012 nothing has changed, it has repeatedly abused trans people with transphobic speech, acts non transparently, distorts facts and lies in its statements, subduing and dividing the trans community, while allegedly stating that it is interested in the rights of the trans community, rights which they are not aware of, nor do they care about, putting them at risk.

The Greek Transgender Support Association, has been active since 2010, with a whole range of activities and we account for our actions. Both to our registered members, having started with 23 and now count to 190 all over Greece, while also publicly stating our activities as well as our financial expenses. We have true everyday activities 365 days a year, not only on a political level in the pursuit of trans rights, but also concerning individual cases of discrimination and violence in a multitude of cases: In education, the workplace, health, when trans individuals are being incarcerated, in trans and generally LGBTQI asylum issues, in all fields. We have fully supported victims of discrimination and violence in all possible ways. We have a team of psychological support not only in Athens, but in Thessaloniki as well. A team of legal support, one of parents for the support of their peers and their trans children, a GTSA team for the rural territories and finally one of volunteers. There have also been cases in which we have put ourselves at risk with our signatures, bringing ourselves in direct conflict with the police in many occurrences. And since all of this happens in the light of day, with everyday work and activities, and since we have an obligation towards all our effort, any minor comparison with any other team which has no real activities to present, is not only irrelevant, but also insulting.

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