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PRESS RELEASE

Second Trial Observation Mission in Cyprus: As Doros Polycarpou's prosecution continues, international attention and support intensify

On the occasion of the first hearing of the trial against Doros Polykarpou, Executive Director of **KISA** (Action for Equality, Support and Anti-racism), scheduled on 12 December 2011, in Larnaca, Cyprus, the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (**EMHRN**), The Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (**PICUM**), The European Network Against Racism (**ENAR**), **Migreurop** and The European Association for Human Rights (**AEDH**) have sent a second trial observation mission. Several meetings had been arranged with the competent Cypriot authorities to express our on-going concern regarding the criminalisation of Mr Polycarpou, accused of rioting during the Rainbow Festival 2010 in Larnaca, accusations which the delegation believes are unfounded.

The delegation profoundly regrets that the hearing was postponed for unclear reasons. It is also regrettable that several meetings with the responsible authorities were cancelled at the last minute, which questions the willingness of the authorities to cooperate on the issue.

More than a year after the tragic events of the 13th Rainbow Festival in Larnaca, we are deeply concerned that no independent investigation has been requested in relation to the alleged failure of the police to protect those participating in the event. Additionally, Mr Polycarpou's case has been highlighted by international organisations such as the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, and the international community, including the UN Human Rights Council and the Council of Europe, as being a matter of serious concern. These concerns seemed to have had very little impact on the proceedings.

“We urge the Cypriot authorities to take a firm position in safeguarding the rights of human rights defenders, especially in the prospect of Cyprus taking on the EU presidency next year. We are determined to mobilise as much support as possible to ensure that an independent investigation is carried out and the charges are dropped” said Marie Lavrentiadou (EMHRN), who took part in the mission.

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