

OBJECTIVE  
**02**

To promote Human Rights and Democracy, involving citizens in policy dialogue, design and monitoring

# QUEERFEST CYPRUS

Action by Queer Cyprus Association



Photo Credit: Pembe Hayat



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## THIS ACTION INVOLVED

Promoting and raising awareness on LGBTI+ rights and movement in the northern part of Cyprus.

Addressing the problems of the LGBTI+, especially the violation of their rights.

Organisation of a four-day-long festival from 14 to 17 May 2019, that included screening several films and documentaries; workshops, panels and discussions on LGBTI+ rights; and two specific workshops on YouTube activism and rights of sex workers.

Production of a policy paper on the rights of sex workers

## ABOUT QUEER CYPRUS ASSOCIATION

Queer Cyprus is a civil society movement that started as an "Initiative against Homophobia" in 2008. The initiative became an association and was renamed as Queer Cyprus Association in 2012. The aim of the association is to combatting discrimination based on gender, gender expression, sexual orientation and/or gender identity; prevent homophobia, biphobia and transphobia; protect the Universal Human Rights and Freedom of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex individuals; and organizing events to raise awareness on LGBTI+ issues.

## STORY OF THE ACTION

The Pink Life Queerfest, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and other sexuality, sex and gender diverse (LGBTI+) themed art festival, took place in Cyprus for the first time in May 2019. The Pink Life Queerfest creates a space for artistic expression in the context of LGBTI+ rights; brings together various forms of art, including cinema, performance, music and video; and organizes empowering panels, discussions, workshops, screenings and presentations. The Pink Life LGBTI+ Solidarity Association has been organising this festival in Turkey since 2011. The QueerFest Cyprus aimed to promote and raise awareness on LGBTI+ rights and the LGBTI+ movement in the northern part of Cyprus and address the problems of the LGBTI+ community, including the violation of their rights.

A selection of short films, films and documentaries on LGBTI+ theme was screened throughout the film festival between May 14 and May 17 2019, in Nicosia and Famagusta. After each screening, panelists gave speeches and discussions took place. These included a panel on the rights of sex workers in which a draft policy paper was prepared. The draft will be further developed and used for advocacy by the EU funded LGBTI+ In Freedom from Exploitation (LiFE) Project implemented by the Queer Cyprus Association. During the YouTube activism workshop, which was the last event of the action, team members of Pink Life Association's YouTube channel shared their experiences and highlighted the importance of YouTube for civil society organisations fighting for LGBTI+ rights.



*"Through all the events, a synergy was formed between participants from both sides of the island. Problems of the LGBTI+ people were made visible, similar examples from around the world were shown, and a platform was established with the hope of finding solutions towards these problems."*

Erman Dolmaci



Photo Credit: Pembe Hayat

## RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

The action increased the visibility of the LGBTI+ community, raised awareness through artistic expression and advocated for the end of discrimination and for equal access to human rights for everyone. The platform established within the action made the issues faced by LGBTI+ people more visible. It showed examples from around the world as an alternative solution to these problems.

The draft policy paper on the rights of sex workers prepared by the panel created a basis for further advocacy and collaboration with local bodies and synergies with projects fighting trafficking in human beings. The paper was also provided to the participants of the experience sharing meeting, held with Kaos GL Association in İzmir, Turkey, as part of the LiFE project mentioned above.



Photo Credit: Pembe Hayat



*"Previously, the Queer Cyprus Association had launched a Solidarity Line with another support from Grow Civic. One transgender woman whom we supported through this line took part in the action and spoke about the support Queer Cyprus gave her, how it changed her life and thanked them. This was a significant moment for us as it showed us that the seeds we planted started to be fruitful."*

Erman Dolmaci



## WHAT'S NEXT?

The policy paper on the rights of sex workers is to be finalised after a mapping study and a fact-finding report on the rights of sex workers. Later, it will be distributed to local bodies as a guide for projects fighting human trafficking.

Queer Cyprus Association organised online the Queerfest Cyprus during the COVID-19 restrictions and plans to organise it traditionally every year.

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THE ACTION



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This Project  
is funded  
by the  
European Union

