

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Macedonia: Ensure protection from discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation

Amnesty International today wrote to the Macedonian authorities expressing concern that the Anti-Discrimination Law adopted last Thursday failed to include provision for the protection from discrimination of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people.

The organization urged that the Anti-Discrimination Law be returned to parliament without further delay, so that amendments guaranteeing protection from discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and sexual identity could be immediately adopted.

The letter, addressed to Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski, noted that that a comprehensive anti-discrimination law was a requirement of the *aquis* with the European Union, and the adoption of the law without provisions for the protection of LGBT people was inconsistent with the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. Protection from such discrimination is also an obligation under international human rights treaties to which Macedonia is a state party.

Amnesty International considered the suggestions by the Minister for Labour and Social Policy, Xhelal Bajrami that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals could request protection under "other grounds", to be inadequate. Any such legislation should expressly include all those whose rights should be protected under the law, and specifically include sexual orientation among the list of grounds of prohibited discrimination.

Amnesty International also noted that the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, of which Macedonia is due to assume the Presidency in May 2010, had in March issued a Recommendation to Council of Europe member states, to ensure that they protect the rights of LGBT people, including through the adoption of anti-discrimination legislation.

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