



LICENSOR OF EUROPRIDE

**EUROPEAN
PRIDE** ORGANISERS
ASSOCIATION

14 March 2021

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
United Kingdom

Rt Hon Robert Buckland QC MP
Ministry of Justice
102 Petty France
London SW1H 9AJ
United Kingdom

Dear Secretaries of State

Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts bill

The European Pride Organisers Association is a membership organisation that brings together the organisers of LGBTI+ Pride events across Europe. We were founded in London almost 30 years ago and currently have more than 40 member organisations in the United Kingdom. Whilst we do not formally represent our members we do advocate for the Pride movement as a whole.

We wish to express serious concerns about the potential impact on LGBTI+ Pride parades and marches of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts bill currently before the House of Commons.

As you will be very well aware, Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights protects the right to freedom of assembly and association. The European Court of Human Rights held (in *Bączkowski and Others v Poland*, 1543/06) in May 2007 that attempts to curtail a Pride parade constituted a breach of Articles 11, 13 and 14 of the Convention.

The proposed legislation would allow any police officer to halt a Pride parade or march if they deem that the parade or march is disrupting 'the activities of an organisation' or causes 'impact on persons in the vicinity'. Pride parades and marches are by their very nature and history forms of protest and causing disruption, noise and impact – only for a few hours – is the fundamental point of the event.

Whilst we would always defend the right of anyone to protest peacefully and lawfully, we note that it is the more spontaneous protest that is the real target of this legislation, rather than Pride events which are the culmination of months of planning and liaison

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with authorities. Nevertheless, the wording of the bill would allow its interventions to be applied to a Pride event.

We note that Mr Buckland has signed the bill to indicate that he believes it to be aligned with the Convention rights enshrined in domestic law under the Human Rights Act 1988. We do not believe that this assertion would stand a test at the European Court if the new bill, if enacted, is used to curtail or prevent a Pride parade or march.

Our Association is very well used to making representations to governments in countries where LGBTI+ equality is far behind the United Kingdom. We are surprised of the necessity for us to be making representations to a United Kingdom government introducing legislation that would be more commonly expected in Poland, Hungary or Turkey.

We urge you to bring forward amendments to the aforementioned bill to safeguard these freedoms for LGBTI+ people in the UK, and to protect the fundamental Convention rights that apply to us all.

Yours faithfully

Kristine Garina
President

Email president@europride.info

CC: Nick Thomas-Symonds MP, Shadow Home Secretary
David Lammy MP, Shadow Justice Secretary
Officers of the APPG on Global LGBT Rights
Members of the Joint Committee on Human Rights
Members of the House of Commons Justice Select Committee
Members of the House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee