

Press Release – 02/03/2020

***KISA calls on the Minister to retract his defamatory statements and to proceed to a dialogue with the stakeholders and NGOs concerned***

The government has reacted to the increased refugee and migrant flows of the last 2-3 years with an [ever more extreme right narrative](#), which comprises, among others, interconnecting migrants and refugees to matters of security, terrorism, unemployment and social cohesion. According to this narrative, refugees are channelled by Turkey following a plan that aims at [changing the demographic nature and the full control of Cyprus](#).

It seems that KISA with its critical positions and views against this narrative annoys the establishment as well as other extreme right and nationalistic circles. That is why, there is lately [a systematic attempt targeting, smearing and mudslinging of the work and action of KISA and its leadership](#) by a section of the printed and electronic media that agrees and supports the extreme right policies of the executive branch. The aims of this attempt are:

1. To dispute the role and motives of our engagement and actions for the rights of refugees and the rule of law in the area of migration and asylum, implying that we are acting for serving foreign interests and not of our society.
2. They invoke lack of transparency as to the financial situation and funding sources of KISA in order to justify the insinuations for corruption and that we are motivated by making money and not by our interest in promoting and safeguarding human rights.
3. That we are serving Turkey in the implementation of its objective to “alter the demographic nature” and “destabilise the country through refugees”.

KISA expresses its strong condemnation and deep concern with the stance of the Minister of Interior. [In a recent interview to Radio Proto](#), the Minister

1. [Demarcated NGOs into](#) the bad ones that «maximise issues and target government services» and the good ones that do “wonderful”, as he stated, work.
2. He linked KISA and ENAR (European Network Against Racism), of which KISA and other many other organisations in Cyprus and other European countries are members, with [fundamentalist organisations such as the Muslim Brotherhood](#).
3. In serving the aim of linking KISA [Turkey and its policies either on the Cyprus problem or in relation to refugees](#).
4. He left insinuations for possible exploitation of NGOs by organised crime for money laundering so as to justify his intension to “check” the NGOs active in the field of migration and asylum.

KISA calls on the Minister -

- [To publicly retract the insinuations he made on KISA's](#) financial situation and position on fundamentalist movements, and
- To put an end to his polemic against KISA and other NGOs and to proceed to a structured and constructive dialogue on the areas and competencies of his Ministry.

KISA states that, as a non-governmental, non-profit making organisation, has political positions and proposals and that it has been struggling since 1998, [without financial support from the state for a long time and with European funding](#), for the rights of migrants and refugees and for combating racism and xenophobia.

KISA has expressed its position and readiness for cooperation with the relevant competent services and stakeholders for fighting corruption and lack of transparency in all areas of life, including that of civil society. KISA has from the beginning of its establishment, without any legal obligation, [audited accounts available on its website](#).

KISA unequivocally declares that we are not daunted either by direct or indirect threats, or by the attempts to smear our name and integrity of our Organisation and leadership. We continue our work with full transparency as to our actions and funding, exercising our right to freedom of expressing our opinions. KISA will continue to deal with the policies and practices of government services in a spirit of good will but also with criticism as and when required, in the framework of its mandate and in pursuing fulfilling its role and mission.

Steering Committee

