



PRESS RELEASE

EGAM – The European Grassroots Antiracist Movement and the Armenian Diaspora Network – AGBU Europe are sending a delegation of European Civil Society leaders to attend the Commemorations of the genocide against the Armenians in Istanbul organized by their Turkish partners, DurDe! and the Human Rights Association – IHD from April 21st to 25th.

The next day, representatives of three organizations, AGBU Europe, EGAM and DürDe! (Turkey) will travel to Yerevan (Armenia) to commemorate the genocide there.

Paris, April the 19th 2014.

For the second year in a row and 99 years after the genocide of 1915, a European delegation composed of twenty anti-racist and Armenian leaders from 15 countries will be present in Turkey for the commemoration of the genocide against the Armenians, held in that city for the fifth consecutive year.

This is a response to the call of EGAM partners in Turkey DürDe! (Say Stop to Racism!) and the Human Rights Association – IHD. EGAM invited AGBU Europe to form a joint delegation to take part in April 24th commemorations in support of Turkish civil society working for the recognition of the Armenian genocide.

Over 4 days, the delegation will meet representatives of the Turkish civil society (leaders of the Gezi movement, intellectuals, Kurdish activists, Armenian communities leaders, artists, etc.), the young generation, with a conference at Sehir University and representatives of minority groups. The Delegation will indeed take part in the April 24th commemorations of the Genocide, on Taksim Square.

On April 25th, some of the delegates, including a large group of Turkish activists, will head to Yerevan to commemorate the Armenian genocide together.

This joint commemoration in Istanbul is intended to express solidarity with Turkish activists working for historical truth. It is also inspired by a common sense of justice, as genocide denial is also an extension of the act of genocide. It is, finally, intended as a contribution to the strengthening of democracy and of a vibrant civil society.

The initiative was supported by numerous personalities (including **Charles Aznavour, Serge Klarsfeld, Bernard Kouchner, Dario Fo, Bernard-Henri Lévy, Adam Michnik, Tahar Ben Jelloun, Ahmet Insel, Olivero Toscani, Jovan Divjak, etc.**) and representatives of European civil society, who have signed an appeal available here : www.remember24april1915.eu

The appeal will be published in several prominent European newspapers, including Le Monde (France), La Repubblica (Italy), Gazeta Wyborcza (Poland), Publico (Portugal), Le Soir (Belgium), Kristeligt Dagblad (Denmark), Eesti Päevaleht (Estonia), To Vima (Greece), Dnevnik (Macedonia), Montenegro (<http://www.e-balkan.net>), Adevarul (Romania), SME (Slovakia), La

Tribune de Genève (Suisse)...

The Commemoration ceremonies will take place on Taksim Square at 7.15pm. A press conference will be held on April 23 at 11.00 am in Cezayir restaurant, Firuzağa Mh., Hayriye Cd No:16, Beyoğlu.

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Created in 2010, EGAM – European Grassroots Antiracist Movement is a network that gathers the main antiracist NGOs from 30 countries. Our goal is to work for a more integrated and more active European civil society against racism, antisemitism, racial discrimination and Genocide denial.

The appeal :

Turks, Armenians and Europeans, let's commemorate the Armenian genocide together and in Turkey!

In 1915, the implementation of a methodical and premeditated plan led to the extermination of one and a half million Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, in an attempt to destroy an entire civilization and to “Turkify” Anatolia. The Armenian people were the victims of a genocide which would soon serve as a gruesome reference for others to follow.

The successive governments of the Turkish Republic have since fought to deny the dark side of the history of their country, and to make their people and the world forget that the genocide ever occurred.

Until today the mere reference to these historical facts has provoked fierce opposition in Turkey, including verbal and physical threats and on occasion even murders against their authors. Genocide denial has encouraged racism and hatred against Armenians and other non-Muslim minorities.

While some allege that acknowledging the reality of the Armenian Genocide is an attack on the Turkish people and on Turkishness, it is in fact an attack on genocide-denial and a step towards justice and democracy.

For some years now, some in Turkish civil society have courageously organized commemorations of the Armenian genocide. A circle of truth and righteousness has gradually widened, as more and more voices joined in a humane and moving effort to confront the official discourse of genocide-denial.

Last year, for the first time in nearly a century, a foreign delegation made up of European antiracist, human rights and Armenian diaspora leaders joined the commemorations in Turkey, answering the call for solidarity launched by Turkish civil society.

Together we have shown that in Turkey the number of people who acknowledge and remember the Armenian genocide is increasing every day. We have shown that there exists a part of Turkish

society that is strongly attached to the values of democracy and human rights, and is ready to confront its past with lucidity.

This year, human rights and anti-racist activists, committed citizens, civil society leaders, intellectuals and artists, united in Turkey and across Europe by a common desire to see the truth finally recognized, will commemorate the Armenian Genocide in Turkey on April 24th 2014. Event though we are on the eve of the centenary of the perpetration of the genocide, its legacy remains part of our present.

Our shared initiative is one for recognition, solidarity, justice, and democracy.

It is an initiative for recognition: it allows members of the Armenian Diaspora and Turkish Armenians who have resisted exile to openly mourn their ancestors; it allows Turkish individuals and organizations to ask for forgiveness on behalf of their ancestors.

It is an initiative for solidarity between all those who fight for the acceptance of history. The divide is not between Turks and Armenians but between those who struggle for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide and those who promote denial. Quite simply, it is not a question of origins but of perspectives for the future.

It is an initiative for justice: In the words of Elie Wiesel, “Genocide kills twice, the second time through silence.” Denial is the perpetuation of genocide, and genocide is the most violent act which racism can lead to. Fighting denial is an attempt to heal the trauma transmitted in Armenian communities as well as in Turkish society from one generation to the next. Fighting denial is thus part of the fight against racism, for a more equal and a fairer society. It offers new generations the opportunity to look together towards the future.

Finally, it is an initiative for democracy, not only because lifting the taboo of the genocide is an indispensable condition for advancing freedom of speech in Turkey, but also because, as Jorge Semprun frequently recalled, democracy requires the vitality of civil society. Strengthening relationships between civil societies will reinforce those who have been fighting to advance democracy in Turkey and elsewhere in Europe.

For these reasons, on April 24 we will commemorate the Armenian Genocide together *and* in Turkey. We call upon all individuals committed to recognition, solidarity, justice and democracy to join us or to support us in turning the page on a century of denial.

Paul Morin, Executive Director of the European Grassroots Antiracist Movement – EGAM (Europe), **Cengiz Algan & Levent Sensever**, Spokespeople for Durde! (Turkey), **Alexis Govciyan**, President & **Nicolas Tavitian**, Director of the Armenian General Benevolent Union – AGBU (Europe), **Ayse Öktem**, Platform for “Confronting a Century of Denial” (Turkey), **Charles Aznavour**, Singer (France), **Bernard Henri Lévy**, Philosopher (France), **Abdullah Demirbas**, Mayor of Sur district of Diyarbakir (Turkey), **Ara Toranian**, Co-President of “Coordination Council of Armenian Organizations in France” (CCAF), **Serge Klarsfeld**, President of “Sons and Daughters of Deported Jews from France” (France), **Murat Timur**, President of the Van Bar Association (Turkey), **Öztürk Türkdoğan**, Head of the Human Rights Association (IHD) (Turkey), **Gilbert Dalgalian**, linguist, **Bernard Kouchner**, former French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Founder of Doctors Without Borders and Doctors of the World, **Adam Michnik**, Historian, journalist, essayist and former leader of Solidarnosc (Poland), **Ragıp Zarakolu**, Writer (Turkey), **Roni Margulies**, Journalist and poet (Turkey), **Jovan Divjak**, Former Commanding General of Yugoslav Army, Defender of besieged Sarajevo (Bosnia), **Ömer Laçiner**, Writer

(Turkey), **Tahar Ben Jelloun**, Writer and poet (Morocco), **Dario Fo**, Writer, Nobel Prize for literature (Italy), **Ferhat Kentel**, Sociologist (Turkey), **Murat Celikkan**, Journalist (Turkey), **André Glucksmann**, Philosopher (France), **Korhan Gümüs**, Architect (Turkey), **Richard Prasquier**, Vice-President of Shoah Foundation (France), **Prof. Dr. Sinan Özbek**, Profesör (Turkey), **Prof. Dr. Gençay Gürsoy**, Profesör (Turkey), **Edward Mier-Jedrzejowicz**, Chairman, Foundation M.K. z Tyskiewiczow Krolikiewicz (Poland), **Oliviero Toscani**, Photographer (Italy), **Yann Moix**, Writer (France), **Prof. Dr. Ahmet Insel**, Profesör (Turkey),

Alma Masic, President of Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR) (Bosnia), **Armen Artwich**, Vice President of Foundation of Culture and Heritage of Polish Armenians (Poland), **Deyan Koley**, Chairman of “Amalipe” (Bulgaria), **Faik Akçay**, Writer (Turkey), **Séta Papazian**, President of the “Collectif VAN” (France), **Sonia Avakian-Bedrosian**, President of AGBU-Sofia (Bulgaria), **Marian Mandache**, Executive Director of “Romani Criss” (Romania), **Raffi Kantian**, Chairman of the board, “German-Armenian Society” (Germany), **Çagla Oflas**, Platform for “Confronting a Century of Denial” (Turkey), **Prof. Dr. Ayse Gözen**, Profesör (Turkey), **Elina Chilinguirian**, Journalist (Belgium), **Raba Gjoshi**, Executive Director of the Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR) (Kosovo), **Prof. Dr. Ayse Gözen**, Profesör (Turkey), **Patrick Donabedian**, Historian and lecturer, Aix-Marseille University (France), **Mario Mazic**, Director of Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR) (Croatia), **Ümit Kurt**, Writer (Turkey), **Elena Gabrielian**, Journalist (France), **Jovana Vukovic**, “Regional Centre for Minorities” (Serbia), **Akif Kurtulus**, Writer (Turkey), **Haik Garabedian**, Co-president AGBU Young Professionals of Plovdiv (Bulgaria), **Erika Muhi**, Director of the Anti-Discrimination Bureau “NEKI” (Hungary), **Yves Ternon**, Historian (France), **Zeynep Tanbay**, Choreographer (Turkey), **Gazi Giray Günaydin**, Activist (Turkey), **Sezai Temelli**, Lecturer (Turkey), **Simon le Grand**, international civil servant, **Céline Gulekdjian**, Film director (Belgium), **Katalin Barsony**, President of the “Romedia Foundation” (Hungary), **Nurcan Kaya**, Lawyer (Turkey), **Inge Drost**, President of the “Federation of Armenian Organizations in the Netherlands” (The Netherlands), **Alain Daumas**, President of “UFAT” (French Union of Roma Associations) (France), **Gueguel Khatchatouryan**, President of the Armenian community in Milano (Italy), **Adriatik Hasantari**, President of “Roma Active” (Albania), **Maja Micic**, Director of Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR) (Serbia), **Elio Montanari**, Photographer (Turkey), **Hrant Kostanian**, Associate Research Fellow, Centre for European Policy studies (Belgium), **Marcel Kabanda**, President of “Ibuka” (France), **Filiz Montanari**, Film Director (Turkey), **Harout Palanjian**, President of AGBU Holland (The Netherlands), **Prof. Dr. Sinan Özbek**, Profesör (Turkey), **Hélène Piralian**, Psychoanalyst (France), **Miroslav Broz**, President of “Konexe” (Czech Republic), **Yildiz Önen**, Spokeswoman of “Global Peace and Justice Coalition” (Turkey), **Valentina Poghosyan**, Member of the board of AGBU Europe (United Kingdom), **Maria De Franca**, Director of “La Règle du Jeu” (France), **Areg Barseghyan**, International civil servant, ADB (Armenia), **Metin Algan**, Activist of DurDe (Turkey), **Balasz Denes**, Director of “Open Society Initiative for Europe” (Hungary), **Cem Rifat Sey**, Writer (Turkey), **Witold Klaus**, President of SIP (Association for Legal Intervention) (Poland), **Jörn Sudhoff**, Professor of Social Sciences (Turkey), **Dogan Özguden**, Chief Editor, Info-Türk (Belgium), **Katarzyna Kubin**, Director of the Board of the “Foundation for Social Diversity” (Poland), **Zeynep Tozduman**, Investigative Writer (Turkey), **Tatyos Bebek**, Dentist (Turkey), **Güven Gürkan Öztan**, Lecturer (Turkey), **Ergun Günrah**, PR (Turkey), **Kalle Larson**, Director of “Centrum Mot Rasism” (Sweden), **Inci Tugsavul**, Responsible editor Info-Türk (Belgium), **Renée Le Mignot**, Co-President of the “MRAP” (Movement against Racism and for Friendship between Peoples) (France), **Haluk Ünal**, Film Director (Turkey), **Nick Lowes**, Founder of “Hope Not Hate” (United Kingdom), **Cindy Léoni**, President of “SOS Racisme” (France), **Sonia Aïchi**, President of “FIDL” (High school’s Independent and Democratic Federation) (France), **Aldo**

Merkoci, President of “Mjaft Movement” (Albania), **Ahmed Moawia**, President of the “Greek Forum for Migrants” (Greece), **Jette Moller**, President of “SOS Mod Racisme” (Denemark), **Angela Scalzo**, General Secretary of “SOS Razzismo” (Italy), **Nicolai Radita**, President of “Roma National Centre” (Moldavia), **Boris Raonic**, President de “Civil Alliance” (Montenegro), **Paula Sawicka**, President of “Open Republic” (Poland), **Jacques Bérès**, President of “France-Syria Democracy”, President of “Enfants Du Canal” (France), **Bruce Clarke**, Artist (South Africa), **Ina van Looy**, **Centre Communautaire Laïc Juif David Susskind**, (Belgium), **Eduardo Lorenzo Ochoa**, Director, European Friends of Armenia, **Stéphane Mirdkian**, President, Armenian Community of Belgium (Belgium), **Mato Hakhverdian**, Chairman of the Federation of Armenian Organisations in The Netherlands (FAON) (the Netherlands), **Roni Alasor**, Journalist and writer (Norway), **Sebu Aslangil**, Jurist (Turkey), **Atilla Dirim**, Interpreter (Turkey), **Irena Borisova**, Director of “People Against Racism” (Slovakia), **Ofer Bronchtein**, President of “Forum pour la paix” (France), **Prof. Chan E.S. Choenni**, Hindustani Migration and Indian Diaspora, Free University (VU) Amsterdam (The Netherlands), **Andrei Dragomir**, Director of the Moldovan Centre for Human Rights (Moldovia), **Loris Toufanian**, President of Armenian Youth Movement “Nor Seround” (France), **Lina Gidlung**, Director of Antidiscrimination bureau Upsala (Sweden), **Janette Gronsfort**, President of “Rasmus Network” (Finland), **Merle Haruoja**, Director of “Estonian Institute for Human Rights” (Estonia), **Jean Yériché Gorizian**, Spokeperson of Armenian Youth Movement “Nor Seround” (France), **Pierre Henry**, General Director of “France Terre d’Asile” and Executive Board Member of the “European Council for Refugees and Exiles”, **Hristo Ivanovick**, President of “Alliance for Human Rights” (Macedonia), **Krassimir Kanev**, President of the “Bulgarian Helsinki Committee” (Bulgaria), **Anhelita Kamenska**, Director of “Latvian Centre for Human Rights” (Latvia), **Oncho Cherchian**, AGBU Sofia (Bulgaria), **Joël Kotek**, historian (Belgium), **Hakob Kazandjian**, President, FRA in Cyprus (Cyprus), **Jacky Mamou**, President of “Urgence Darfour”, former President of “Doctors of the World”, **Irina Ghaplanyan**, University of Cambridge (United Kingdom), **Anna Šabatová**, Head of “Czech Helsinki Committee” (Czech Republic), **Ahmed Samih**, Head of the “Andalus Institute for Tolerance and Anti-Violence Studies” (Egypt), **Dominique Sopo**, Former President of “SOS Racisme” (France), **Rune Steen**, Director of the “Norwegian Centre Against Racism” (Norway), **Sacha Reingewirtz**, President of the “French Union of Jewish Students” (France), **Muhammadi Yonous**, Head of the “Greek Forum of Refugees” (Greece), **Ligue des Droits de l’Homme** (League of Human Rights) (France), **Europeana Roma and Travellers Forum**(ERTF), **International Human Rights League**, **Nikolai Romashuk Hairabedian**, President of the “Armenian Social and cultural Foundation in The Netherlands” (The Netherlands), **Kate Markaryan** (Russia), **Oncho Cherchian** AGBU Sofia, Bulgaria, **Lisa Abadjian**, psychologist (Belgium), **Mikaail Domanian**, Engineer, AGBU Holland, **Souren Seraydarian**, analyst (France), **Silva Chemedikian**, AGBU Sofia, (Bulgaria), **Harout Mamikonian**, AGBU Holland (the Netherlands), **Apet Georges Iskenderian**, **Ophelia Khachatryan**, **Kate Markaryan** (Russia), **Anelga Aslanian** (Belgium), **Harout Mamikonian** (Netherlands)