

To: President of the Portuguese Republic
Prof. Marcello Rebelo de Sousa
Palácio de Belém
Calçada da Ajuda, nº 11
1349-022 Lisboa (Portugal)

Ghent, Belgium, 29/4/2018

Dear Mr. President of the Portuguese Republic,

Professor Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa,

The European Professional Association for Transgender Health (EPATH), founded in 2013, is a European membership organisation which brings together scholars and clinicians to exchange knowledge and scholarship in order to promote excellence in the provision of transgender healthcare. EPATH functions as the European chapter of the WPATH (World Professional Association for Transgender Health), and as such endorses the Standards of Care (SOC) of WPATH.

EPATH sincerely welcomed the news that the Portuguese Parliament approved a gender recognition law based upon self-determination - enabling trans people to amend their legal gender without the need for medical diagnosis. We see this as an important step towards non-discrimination and upholding the human rights of transgender people in Portugal.

Transgender people are often professionally and socially disadvantaged, and experience direct and indirect discrimination, as well as physical violence. Experiencing disadvantage and discrimination is likely to have a negative impact upon physical and mental health. EPATH condemns all forms of discrimination, segregation, stigmatisation and violence against transgender people and calls for appropriate legal measures to protect their civil rights.

If this law is not enacted, then legal gender recognition procedures in Portugal will continue to require the now outdated diagnosis of “Gender Identity Disorder”. The medical community’s understanding of trans identities has evolved a great deal in the previous five years. As a consequence, in 2013 the American Psychiatric Association changed the trans-related diagnosis from ‘Gender Identity Disorder’ to ‘Gender Dysphoria’. The World Health Organisation has gone even further in its draft of the revised International

Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) and removed the trans-related diagnoses from the mental health chapter.

EPATH endorses the “[Identity Recognition Statement](#)” from WPATH (released on November 15, 2017). EPATH (and WPATH) recognize the right of all people to identity documents consistent with their gender identity, including those documents which confer legal gender status. In this light, we firmly believe that medical and other barriers to gender recognition for transgender individuals may harm physical and mental health, and we oppose all medical requirements that act as barriers to those wishing to change legal sex or gender markers on documents, such as the requirements for diagnosis, counselling or therapy, puberty blockers, hormones, any form of surgery (including that which involves sterilization), or any other requirements for any form of clinical treatment or letters from doctors.

We therefore congratulate the Portuguese Parliament for their approval of this new law and call for its swift promulgation by the President of the Portuguese Republic.

Sincerely yours,

The Board-Members EPATH,

Prof. dr. Guy T’Sjoen, endocrinologist, *President & Director of the Scientific Division*

Dr. Walter Pierre Bouman, psychiatrist, *Director of Communication*

Dr. Annelou De Vries, child psychiatrist, *Director of the Interest of Children and Adolescents*

Prof. dr. Joz Motmans, clinical psychologist & social scientist, *Secretary – Treasurer & Director of the Policy Division*

Dr. Timo O. Nieder, psychotherapist, *Director of Education and Clinical Training*

Dr. Mark-Bram Bouman, surgeon, *European Association For Gender Surgeons (the EAFGS) Liaison Member*

Dr. Griet De Cuyper, psychiatrist, *WPATH Liaison Member*

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