

STATEMENT OF CONCERN

We, the undersigned, write to express our disappointment at the choice of Prof Thio Li Ann as a speaker for the Human Rights Day seminar hosted by the EEAS European Union Delegation to Singapore.

It is a matter of public record that Prof Thio: -

1. believes the LGBT community is not entitled to the protections of human rights with respect to issues of sexuality, even between consenting homosexual adults.

In 2007, Prof Thio argued, in the Parliament of Singapore, in favour of the continued criminalization of adult consensual same sex relations in Singapore. She asserted that:

"Human rights are universal, like prohibitions against genocide. Demands for 'homosexual rights' are the political claims of a narrow interest group masquerading as legal entitlements....You cannot make a human wrong a human right."

2. deliberately used graphic language to engender repugnance against homosexual adults in her 2007 speech:

"Anal-penetrative sex is inherently damaging to the body and a misuse of organs, like shoving a straw up your nose to drink. The anus is designed to expel waste; when something is forcibly inserted into it, the muscles contract and cause tearing; fecal waste, viruses carried by sperm and blood thus congregate, with adverse health implications like 'gay bowel syndrome', anal cancer. 'Acts of gross indecency' under 377A also covers unhygienic practices like "rimming" where the mouth comes into contact with the anus. Consent to harmful acts is no defence – otherwise, our strong anti-drug laws must fall as it cannot co-exist with letting in recreational drugs as a matter of personal lifestyle choice."

3. characterizes attempts by LGBT activists and their allies to promote non-discrimination on grounds of gender and sexuality as a conspiratorial attempts to subvert law, order, community and public morality.

In the same parliamentary speech of 2007, she asserts that: -

"Homosexual activists often try to infiltrate and hijack human rights initiatives to serve their political agenda, discrediting an otherwise noble cause to protect the weak and poor."

And again,

“Conversely, homosexual activists lobby hard for a radical sexual revolution, waging a liberal fundamentalist crusade against traditional morality. They adopt a step-by-step approach to hide how radical the agenda is.”

4. continues to speak of homosexuality as a “gender identity disorder” from which individuals can be “reoriented” and characterizes any scientific research which calls her perspective into question as “politicised pseudo science”.

The EEAS should note that she explicitly endorses a position which runs counter to the professional standards of internationally recognized mental health associations including the World Health Organisation, the American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association, The Royal College of Psychiatrists in the UK, and the Chinese Psychiatric Association amongst others.

An invited speaker is a position of honour and prestige and conveys significant legitimacy to the speaker. With this in mind, we are concerned about the underlying principles and values being communicated to the public with the EEAS’s invitation to Prof Thio to speak at a Human Rights event, given her public statements against the LGBTQ community. Under these circumstances, some may construe this invitation as an implicit endorsement of the speaker and her views by the organizer.

Article 13 of the EC Treaty and the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights explicitly prohibits discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. Moreover, the Commissioner for Human Rights recommends¹ that authorities in Council of Europe member states should:

1. Take a strong public position against violations of the human rights of LGBT persons and promote respect on issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity, for example through human rights education and awareness-raising campaigns.
2. Take steps to encourage factual, objective and professional reporting by the media on LGBT persons and issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity.

The European External Action Service lists one of its key roles as “Human rights defender”.

¹ Council of Europe, Report on Discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in Europe, https://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/Source/LGBT/LGBTStudy2011_en.pdf

We are profoundly disappointed and we urge the EU and the EEAS to explain how inviting Prof Thio as a speaker for a Human Rights Day seminar is consistent with its own stated role as a defender and advocate of human rights.

Signed,

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|-----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 1. Adrian Heok | 36. Jeremy Tiang | 72. Sayoni |
| 2. Alan Seah | 37. Joe Wong | 73. Seelan Palay |
| 3. Alex Au | 38. Joel Tan | 74. Sharon Pereira |
| 4. Alex Serrenti | 39. Jolene Tan | 75. Shelley Thio |
| 5. Alina Ng | 40. Jolovan Wham | 76. Song Jiyoung |
| 6. Alison Kumar | 41. Joshua Chiang | 77. Sun Koh |
| 7. Alvin Tan | 42. Kamal Ramdas | 78. Su-Yin Mah |
| 8. Benjamin Xue | 43. Karen T | 79. Tan Chui Hua |
| 9. Bjorn Yeo | 44. Kate Tan | 80. Tania De Rozario |
| 10. Brendon
Fernandez | 45. Kay Omar | 81. Tanneke Zeeuw |
| 11. Brenna Wee | 46. Ken Kwek | 82. Tara Tan |
| 12. Caryn Tan | 47. Kenneth Chee | 83. Teng QianXi |
| 13. Celestine Alvina
Sun | 48. Kenneth Tan | 84. Teo Elaine
Thanya Marie |
| 14. Celine Lim | 49. Kirsten Han | 85. Teo Soh Lung |
| 15. Charles Tan | 50. Kirsten Tan | 86. Teo Youyenn |
| 16. Cheryl Leong | 51. Lee Xian Jie | 87. Teri Tan |
| 17. Christine Chia | 52. Lim Chong Ming | 88. Think Centre |
| 18. Dana Lam | 53. Lim Jialiang | 89. Thomas Ng |
| 19. David Lee | 54. Lisa Li | 90. Trewy |
| 20. Emily Heng | 55. Lucy Davis | 91. Tricia Leong |
| 21. Eugene Tan | 56. Lynn Lee | 92. Vanessa Victoria |
| 22. Faeza Sirajudin | 57. Mah Chia Chu | 93. Wong Chee Meng |
| 23. Fikri Alkhatib | 58. Mathia Lee | 94. Wong Pei Chi |
| 24. Frederique Soh | 59. Melinda Lee | 95. Wu Ling |
| 25. Gary Lim | 60. Miak Siew | 96. Yuyun
Wahyuningrum –
Indonesia |
| 26. Gillian Seetoh | 61. Michaela Therese | 97. Terence Lee |
| 27. Goh Li Sian | 62. Ng Yisheng | 98. Jacqueline Tan |
| 28. Gwyneth Teo | 63. Nigel Ng | 99. Max Chen |
| 29. H.M. LEOW | 64. Otto Fong | 100. Jen Crawford |
| 30. Jaclyn Chan | 65. Ovidia Yu | |
| 31. Jacob Ma | 66. Pam Oei | |
| 32. Jayet Ng | 67. Rachel Zeng | |
| 33. Jean Chong | 68. Raksha M | |
| 34. Jennifer Teo | 69. Reilly Phanes | |
| 35. Jeremy Tay | 70. Sabrina Lee | |
| | 71. Sangeetha
Thanapal | |