Declaration 1st of March 2018
(UN day of Zero Discrimination)

Conversion therapy has no place in the modern medical and spiritual world

Part A: ‘Statement against conversion therapy’

1. We wish to state that the practice of conversion therapy has no place in the modern world. It is unethical and harmful and not supported by evidence.
2. Conversion therapy is the term for therapy that assumes certain sexual orientations or gender identities are inferior to others, and seeks to change or suppress them on that basis.
3. Sexual orientations and gender identities are not mental health disorders, although exclusion, stigma and prejudice may precipitate mental health issues for any person subjected to these abuses.
4. Anyone accessing therapeutic help should be able to do so without fear of judgement or the threat of being pressured to change a fundamental aspect of who they are.

Part B: ‘Conversion therapy has no place in the modern spiritual world’

5. If someone seeking spiritual help is in need of therapy, they should be referred free from pressure, well informed and only to confidential, safe and appropriately trained therapists.
6. The pathologising by conversion therapy of certain sexual orientations or gender identities has no medical justification and is therefore sometimes referred to as ‘a cure for an illness that does not exist’. Medical diagnosing should never be misused to justify personal and/or religious moral judgment.
7. Conversion therapy often takes place in a context of violence, such as humiliating and dehumanising language, hate speech or exposure to physical violence. Such forms of violence can never be justified, whether it is in a medical or a spiritual context or both.
8. Engaging with conversion therapy, directly or indirectly, is a failure to fulfil one of the core responsibilities medical and spiritual professionals have in common: to protect those who are vulnerable and seek our help. They need to be supported in safe and confidential ways that respect their identity and human dignity.

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Endorsing organisations (European Buddhist Union, 2018)

- Italian Buddhist Union (National Buddhist Union, Italy)
- Buddhist Union of the Netherlands (National Buddhist Union, the Netherlands)
- The Buddhist Cooperation Council of Sweden (National Buddhist Union, Sweden)
- Asociaciòn Hispana de Budismo (Spanish Buddhist Association, Spain)
- The Rainbow Sangha (Buddhist LGBT+ network, European Buddhist Union)
- Sakyadhita France (Association of Buddhist Women, France)
- Centro Zen L’Arco (Zen Buddhist Monastery, Italy)
- Amida Shu (Pureland Buddhist organisation, UK)
- Association Reiyukai France (Reiyukai Buddhist Association, France)
- London Shambhala meditation centre (Shambhala, Vajrayana, UK)
- Haus Tao, Zen meditation centre (Sati-Zen, Switzerland)
- Mandala Samten Ling, Tibetan study centre (Drikung Kagyu tradition, Vajrayana, Italy)
- Buddhist Union of Belgium (National Buddhist Union, Belgium)
- The Committee of the Network of Buddhist Organisations (National Buddhist Union, UK)

Some of the initial personal signatories (European Buddhist Union, 2018)

Stephen Batchelor  
Buddhist teacher and author, France / UK

Ron Eichhorn  
President of the European Buddhist Union  
Head Disciple of the Yun Hwa Denomination  
Abbot of the Yun Hwa centre in Berlin, Germany

Jamie Cresswell  
Vice President of the European Buddhist Union  
Member of SGI-UK, UK

Stefano Bettera  
Vice President of the European Buddhist Union  
Vice-President Italian Buddhist Union, Italy

Dr Michael Vermeulen  
Philosopher and Medical Doctor, London, UK  
Founding member of the Rainbow Sangha

Dario Doshin Girolami  
Abbot Centro Zen L’Arco, Rome, Italy  
Founding member of the Rainbow Sangha

Munisha  
Member of the Triratna Buddhist Order, Stockholm, Sweden  
Founding member of the Rainbow Sangha

Gabriela Frey  
Representative of the European Buddhist Union to the European Institutions  
Member Sakyadhita France, France

Michael Ritman  
Member of the Council of the European Buddhist Union  
President Buddhist Union of the Netherlands, The Netherlands

Isabelle Huet  
Member of the Council of the European Buddhist Union  
Member Reiyukai France, France

Ricardo Guerrero  
President of the Asociación Hispana de Budismo, Spain

Trudy Fredriksson  
Chair of the Buddhist Cooperation Council of Sweden, Sweden

Kurt Krammer  
Founder Zendo Salzburg, Austria  
Board chair of the Austrian Network of Engaged Buddhists

Jake Lyne  
Teacher at the Western Chan Fellowship, UK

Martin Schaurhofer  
Representative of the Österreichische Buddhistische Religionsgesellschaft, Austria

Alain Colliard  
President of the Association Reiyukai, France

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Endorsing organisations Part A (United Kingdom, 16 January 2017)

- The Royal College of General Practitioners
- The College of Sexual and Relationship Therapists
- The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
- The British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies
- The British Psychoanalytic Council
- The British Psychological Society
- The National Counselling Society
- The UK Council for Psychotherapy
- National Health Service Scotland
- The Scottish Government
- GLADD – The Association of LGBT Doctors and Dentists
- Pink Therapy
- Stonewall