Ms Joan Burton TD,
Minister for Social Protection
Department of Social Protection,
Store Street,
Dublin 1
Ireland

Berlin, 30 April 2013

Dear Minister Burton,

Last September you greeted personally and very warmly Transgender Europe and the 4th European Transgender Council meeting in Dublin. The 250 delegates felt honoured to be addressed by you, the Minister for Social Protection. You gave the international and Irish transgender activists hope and confidence with your promise to move forward swiftly with introducing Gender Recognition. In your speech you expressed your personal commitment and referred to a very narrow time frame for introducing appropriate legislation by the end of the year 2012.

In your reply from December 2012 to the Council of Europe’s Human Rights Commissioner Nils Muiznieks’s letter in this regard, you indicated that the Heads of Bill would be introduced to the Joint Oireachtas Committee within the first half of 2013.

We are very disappointed to learn now that according to the new government programme for legislation, the introduction of a Bill for legal Gender Recognition is now not scheduled until 2014. As a consequence, transgender people in Ireland will remain unable to obtain legal recognition of their gender identity for at least another year. This situation is in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights as found already in 2007 by the Irish courts in the Lydia Foy case. As you may know, Dr. Foy has in the meantime taken up new
proceedings against the State as she remains unable to get a birth certificate indicating she is a woman.

Minister Burton, we respectfully call upon you to uphold your commitment made last September and take significant steps very soon to proceed with the preparation of this long outstanding legislation.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Julia Ehrt
Executive Director
Transgender Europe – TGEU

Copy sent to:
- Tanaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) Eamon Gilmore
- Minister for Foreign Affairs Eamon Gilmore
- Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Enda Kenny
- Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights Nils Muiznieks