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EUROPE 

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- relaying the views of the stakeholders and society at large

For more information see:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/progress/index_en.html

The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.

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ILGA-EUROPE:

The European Commission will propose single anti-discrimination directive!

by Juris Lavrikovs, ILGA-Europe's Communications manager



*Mr Barroso, the President of the European Commission meeting the representatives of the Social Platform, 12 June 2008
Right to left: Conny Reuter, (President of the Social Platform); Rochan Di Puppò (Director of the Social Platform,); Mr Barroso; Fintal Farrell (Director of the European Anti- Poverty Network); Patricia Prendiville (Executive Director of ILGA-Europe); Mohammed Aziz (President of the European Network Against Racism)*

On 16 June 2008, the European Commissioner Barrot announced publicly before the European Parliament that the Commission will propose single anti-discrimination directive covering all Article 13 grounds (age, disability, religion/belief and sexual orientation) and covering all areas of life outside employment (discrimination on the basis of these grounds in employment is already banned at EU level). The proposal is expected to be available on 2 July 2008 when we will be able to learn in greater details about the specifics of the Commission proposal.

This is great news. ILGA-Europe and its members were on the front line of the campaign calling for a horizontal directive and we would like to express our thanks to all who supported and tirelessly worked to ensure that the Commission changes its mind and return to its original plan to propose single directive covering all grounds of discrimination.

However this is not the end of the campaign. Once the proposal is announced, it will be forwarded to the European Council for adoption. We know that some EU member states have opposed this piece of legislation

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and the battle is not completely won. Once the Commission's proposal is out, ILGA-Europe will assess it and will redefine its campaign to ensure there is wide and strong support for the directive amongst the EU member states.

Meanwhile, ILGA-Europe and ENAR (the European Network Against Racism) initiated a joint statement by various civil society organisations and trade unions to express our satisfaction at that the European Commission made such an important and right decision. Below is the statement:

On 16 June 2008, Commissioner Barrot confirmed to the European Parliament in Strasbourg that the European Commission will propose a cross-cutting directive aimed at combating discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, religion/belief and sexual orientation in areas outside the field of employment.

We, civil society organisations as well as trade unions working for equality, human rights and social justice, warmly welcome this news and congratulate President Barroso and the European Commission on their consistent commitment to equality for all. We greatly appreciate their political leadership in making this important decision to extend the protection against discrimination to all non-discrimination grounds mentioned under the EU Treaty, and to ensure that all people in Europe are equally protected from discrimination and enjoy the same rights. We also thank the European Parliament for its strong support and we now hope that this initiative gets the full support of all EU Member States.

Signatories:

1. **ILGA-Europe** – the European Region of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) – www.ilga-europe.org
2. **ENAR** – the European Network Against Racism – www.enar-eu.org
3. **ETUC** – the European Trade Union Confederation – www.etuc.org
4. **EWL** – the European Women's Lobby – www.womenlobby.org
5. **YFJ** – the European Youth Forum – www.youthforum.org
6. **EAPN** – the European Anti-Poverty Network – www.eapn.org
7. **SOLIDAR** – a network of social and economic justice NGOs working in co-development and international cooperation, social policy and social service provision, and life-long learning – www.solidar.org
8. **AGE** – the European Older People's Platform – www.age-platform.org

Further information about ILGA-Europe's campaign on this directive on our website:

http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/campaigns_projects/campaign_for_a_new_european_anti_discrimination_legislation

Staff news: new Communications and Finance & Administration Officers

by ILGA-Europe



Michael Forrest - Communications Officer:

Originally from Northern Ireland, Michael studied Modern Languages (German/French) in Edinburgh, Scotland, and subsequently worked in Leipzig and Düsseldorf, Germany for many years as a technical translator. In 1995 he moved to Brussels to work as a freelance translator and gained considerable experience in drafting technical documentation, manuals and publications. In 2005 he took up a post as Information Officer for a Brussels-based NGO active in the field of public health and was responsible for following up of policy developments, press work, news releases, information briefs, publications and web content. Michael joined ILGA-Europe in June 2008 and works in the communications service area.



Camille Lambinon - Finance and Administration Officer:

Camille is originally from France and joined ILGA-Europe's team in June 2008. Prior to joining ILGA-Europe, Camille analysed life conditions in old peoples' homes for the Lyons County. She also worked as a volunteer in different LGBT associations. She graduated from the Human Rights Master's programme in Strasbourg (thesis on EU actions to improve human rights in China) and holds a Bachelor Degree in International law from Leiden University (Netherlands).

ILGA-EUROPE:

Two job opportunities with ILGA-Europe: Programmes and Policy Officers

by ILGA-Europe

The post holders will be responsible for the coordination of capacity building / advocacy projects at regional and pan-European level, organise events, and provide effective policy and research services to support the work of ILGA-Europe and the achievement of the tasks set out in the work programmes and the postholder's agreed objectives.

Candidates should be strongly committed to working for equality, and have competencies and experience in developing and implementing projects, organising capacity building events and longer term capacity building programmes, developing, presenting and implementing policy papers / proposals, in lobbying and in working with members and external (project) partners.

Deadline for application: 30 June 2008

For further details about the jobs and applications form please visit our website:

http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/about_us/job_opportunity

Council of Europe: Human Rights Commissioner speaks out against discrimination against LGBT people in Albania

by Nigel Warner, ILGA-Europe's Council of Europe Advisor

A report by Thomas Hammarberg to the Committee of Ministers and to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe highlights the routine "intolerance, physical and psychological violence" faced by LGBT people in Albania, and calls for efforts by the Albanian government to make victims of discrimination aware of their rights, and have an independent authority to receive their complaint. He also suggests a combination of public campaigns, integration of further sexual education within the school curricula, and further training of state professionals, including law enforcement, judicial and medical personnel.

The text of his comment on LGBT rights is as follows:

5.5 Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Persons

95. Same-sex consensual relations have been decriminalised by the Albanian Parliament but an open discussion regarding homosexuality remains taboo in Albania. Since 2004 the age of consent for heterosexual and homosexuals is 14. Albania does not recognise marriages or civil unions of any kind between same sex partners. A draft antidiscrimination law has been submitted to the parliament; among its provisions it addresses equal opportunities for all irrespective of sexual orientation.

96. LGBT persons are routinely subject to intolerance, physical and psychological violence and seen by many as persons suffering from an "illness". There were reports from the OSCE Mission, human rights NGO's and LGBT groups whom the Commissioner met that the LGBT community suffers abuses not only from the general public, but that there have also been cases of mistreatment by the police. The recent Naser Muhed Saidik Almalak case (relating to the arrest of five individuals in Tirana) highlighted shortcomings in police arrest and detention procedures when dealing with LGBT persons, but also discrimination, arbitrariness, maltreatment and the public disclosure of the health status of some of the arrested persons.

97. The People's Advocate holds the mandate to receive complaints from individuals on cases such as

EUROPE:

discrimination or mistreatment by state authorities including the police. However, there is no single competent body that may accept complaints on the grounds of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in Albania in the context of employment. This lacuna, results in victims being dissuaded or discouraged entirely from seeking just satisfaction. The Commissioner would welcome efforts by the Albanian authorities to ensure that any victims of discrimination are firstly made aware of their rights, and have access to a fully independent competent authority to receive their complaint.

98. Although for the past decade same sex acts have been legal, attitudes have not changed much. This lacking public acceptance of LGBT may be attributable to the Communist heritage and patriarchal attitudes which have perpetuated a discriminatory and repressive attitude towards certain groups within society. To sensitise people on diversity of sexuality requires education. This could take the form of a combination of public campaigns, integration of further sexual education within school curricula and further training of state professionals including law enforcement, judicial and medical personnel.

The full text of the report is at:

[https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CommDH\(2008\)8&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864#P307_63341](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CommDH(2008)8&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864#P307_63341)

Lithuania passes anti-discrimination law

By Virginija Prasmickaite, Lithuanian Gay League

On 17 June 2008, the *Seimas* passes the Law on Equal Treatment according to which discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, faith, belief, views, age, disability, ethnic affiliation, and religion was banned. Before the voting, an amendment to the bill was proposed allowing non compliance with the equality principle in educational and training institutions of religious communities.

Prior to the final vote, the LGBT Rights Intergroup of the European parliament expressed its concerns regarding the proposal to exclude words 'sexual orientation' from the bill. The Intergroup issued a statement which said that would mean that Lithuanian citizens and visitors to the country would not be protected against unequal treatment, so paving the way for discrimination in access to services and goods. This would also diminish the possibility of effective redress in discrimination cases in employment, which is against Employment Directive. "I must warn Lithuania, that sanctions will follow, if the effective redress stipulated in Directive 2000/78/EC is not guaranteed", said Michael Cashman, President of the Intergroup.

The adoption of the law had a few hurdles to overcome when some members of the *Seimas* expressed their resentment that discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation was intended to be banned. Previously, such a provision was contained in the draft amendment to the Law on Equal Treatment, yet member of the "Order and Justice" party, Egidijus Klumbys, proposed to eliminate it and prohibit the granting of privileges to a person on the basis of sexual orientation, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, faith, and beliefs or opinions, as is stated in the Constitution.

Lawyers warned that such a regulation would fail to comply with the EU directive which reinforces the general grounds for equal treatment in employment and professional field, and would violate the constitutional principles of legitimate expectations: at present the law prohibits discrimination on the grounds of age, sexual orientation and disability. After these grounds were eventually restored, heated discussions took place in the *Seimas* session room.

Croatia indecisive about including gender identity into anti-discrimination bill

by Aija Salo, ILGA-Europe Programmes and Policy Officer

ILGA-Europe has approached representatives of the government and parliament of Croatia with a letter expressing concern for the attempt of the Catholic Church to prevent the parliament from including gender identity in the anti-discrimination bill. The procedure of approving the bill has been delayed apparently due to pressure from the church. ILGA-Europe asked the Croatian parliament to adopt the proposed Combating Discrimination Bill, containing the provision prohibiting discrimination on the ground of gender identity.

ILGA-Europe reminded Croatian authorities of the fact that transgender persons face discrimination and violence due to their gender identity in everyday life. They are often denied right to healthcare, right to work, right to life without violence and other basic human rights. It is an obligation of the State to protect all citizens equally against discrimination.

ILGA-Europe also drew attention to the fact that the purpose of the Anti-discrimination Bill is to fill in the gaps identified in the 2007 Progress Report on Croatia by the European Commission, and that The European Court of Justice has held that the scope of the principle of equal treatment for men and women cannot be confined to the prohibition of discrimination based on the fact that a person is of one or other sex but also applies to discrimination arising from the gender reassignment of a person.

EUROPE:

US Religious Right increasingly active against LGBT rights at European level

by Nigel Warner, ILGA-Europe's Council of Europe Advisor

Two recent initiatives suggest that the US Religious Right may be becoming increasingly active in opposing LGBT rights at European level.

An organisation called the European Centre for Law and Justice (which is very closely linked to the American Center for Law and Justice) has published a paper attacking the work of the Legal Affairs and Human Rights Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on legal recognition of same-sex partners. The ECLJ is reported to be "spearheading a campaign with other NGOs" to oppose any resolution by the Assembly on legal recognition. The full text of the paper, which contains significant factual errors and displays a low level of knowledge of the European Convention, can be found at:

http://www.eclj.org/PDF/080307_ECLJ_Memo_Same_sex_union.pdf

In an apparently separate development, the US-based Catholic Family & Human Rights Institute, known more widely by its short name, C-Fam, has published a lengthy paper entitled "Europe's Social Agenda -- Why is the European Union regulating Morality?" It reviews the history of developments on "morality" at the EU and makes much of the "biased" support for NGOs such as ILGA Europe. It also includes a considerable number of factual errors. It is written by C-Fam's "Chief EU Strategist", Maciej Golubiewski, who, incidentally, is the person who has publicised the ECLJ paper referred to above. The text of the C-Fam paper can be found at:

http://www.c-fam.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=545

EUROPE:

UK foreign office issues guidelines for embassies on supporting LGBT rights

by Nigel Warner, ILGA-Europe's Council of Europe Advisor

The UK foreign office has now adopted an official programme in support of LGBT rights, and has issued a toolkit to its embassies around the world providing guidance on the this programme.

The Programme and toolkit provide a great opening for LGBT activists to approach their local UK embassy when they need help.

Only the Netherlands and Sweden are believed to have adopted similar specific programmes. LGBT organisations in other friendly countries might consider using the UK example to encourage a more focused approach by their own government.

Copies of the documents can be obtained from Nigel Warner at nwarner@gn.apc.org

Lesbos islanders go to court in bid to reclaim the word lesbian

Source: The Guardian, 10.6.2008

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/jun/10/gayrights.greece>

"An attempt to stop homosexual women calling themselves lesbians begins in Athens today with a court hearing that comes amid growing national debate over gay rights in one of Europe's most socially conservative countries. The hearing has been initiated by plaintiffs on the Aegean island of Lesbos, who say they are unhappy that gay women have "usurped" a term that locals claim should have only geographical connotations. The hearing coincides with a highly charged national debate over gay rights [...]"

Comment: one cannot disregard neither the timing of this legal motion nor the fact that the (three) plaintiffs chose the procedure of "interim measures" to bring their claim to the Court; in principle, this procedure demands the prerequisite of "urgency" in the need to protect a plaintiff's right which is allegedly violated; the Court's decision and its attached is awaited – with extreme interest – even before the autumn of 2008.

LGBT FAMILIES:

Norway adopts gender neutral marriage law

by Juris Lavrikovs, ILGA-Europe's Communications Manager

On 11 June 2008, the Norwegian parliament delivered its final approval of the gender neutral marriage law and thus law opening up civil marriage opportunity to same-sex partners. This makes Norway the fourth country in Europe and the sixth country in the world to provide full equality in terms of the matrimonial law regardless of sexual orientation. Same-sex partners will now be able to enjoy all the rights and responsibilities of civil marriage, and will be entitled to jointly apply for adoption. Lesbian couples will be entitled to use state-sponsored artificial insemination procedures.

ILGA-Europe is pleased with this significant development and would like to congratulate lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Norway, the Norwegian politicians and the entire Norwegian society for their courage, determination and ability to overcome prejudice and to deliver equality.

Read more on our website: www.ilga-europe.org

LGBT FAMILIES:

Austria: LGBT NGOs are rejecting draft partnership bill

Source: media release by Rechtskomitee LAMBDA, 15 June 2008

Austrian Minister of Justice, Maria Berger (Social-Democrat) last May presented a draft registered partnership bill which is out for consultation until next Monday.

In a joint press-conference Austria's LGBT-organisations are vehemently opposing that law. It would create the worst partnership law in the world.

It regulates only civil- and criminal-law-issues, i.e. mutual civil rights and obligations of the partners (maintenance, assistance, joint residence, faithfulness, division of property etc.).

It does not however contain the social rights which are attached to marriage exactly because spouses take over these mutual obligations (nothing in tax law, pension insurance, health insurance, employment, immigration, citizenship, etc. etc.; and nothing on the level of the law of the nine states). Even in civil- and criminal-law the draft does not create equality but establishes 24 deviations from marriage. The Minister of Justice insists on the 24 deviations and says, that the other areas will follow later; and if not, then same-sex couples could go to the courts and sue for equality.

On 13 June Austria's LGBT-organisations addressed the public with a joint press conference sending out a strong joint message: if this bill will not be improved by creating equality in all areas of the law the status quo would be better than this bill. Today same-sex couples don't have the rights which married couples do enjoy. But neither they have the obligations. If this bill would become law same-sex registered partners would have all obligations of marriage without the rights attached to marriage. This would be unacceptable to the LGBT movement. It will be strongly resisted.

The bill and the outcome of the consultation process can be found at <http://www.parlament.gv.at>.

LGBT FAMILIES:

Greek LGBTs fighting an uphill battle for acceptance

by Pantelis Ravdas

Greece is recently witnessing a vivid debate over the legal recognition of same-sex unions, which coincides with the finalisation of the Greek government's proposal regarding a new law regarding 'de facto' heterosexual unions; the Greek LGBT movement fights to achieve the inclusion of same-sex unions to the proposed law, whereas the official governmental reaction has been that "the Greek society – though ready to accept the de facto heterosexual unions - is not yet mature enough to accept such a recognition for same-sex couples"; interestingly, the issue remains in the front line of the daily news, fed by a series of highly symbolic activist moves which reached their climax when two civil same-sex marriages were held on 3.6.2008 in the small Aegean isle of Tilos, despite the fact that their mere legal status is highly dubious, as it is based on the fact that the Greek civil code (drafted after the 2nd world war) does not specifically mention "man" and "woman" in its chapter for marriage.

It still remains to be seen whether and how the Greek LGBT movement will administer the recent over-publicity of the issue in order to achieve the desired actual social and legal evolution; in the above context, the Greek legal and political communities are now face to face with their duties, perspectives and abilities when it comes to articulating and reflecting social change.

LGBT FAMILIES:

Special issue on the Family around the Globe – Utrecht Law Review

by Matteo Bonini Baraldi

The latest issue of the Utrecht Law Review Special on Current Debates in Family Law around the Globe is available at www.utrechtlawreview.org. All papers can be fully downloaded at no charge.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY, EXPRESSION AND ASSOCIATION

Closing of Lambdaistanbul by court decision violates freedom of association and breaks Turkey's commitment to international human rights standards

by Aija Salo, ILGA-Europe Programmes and Policy Officer

A Beyogly court in Istanbul ruled the closure of the oldest LGBT organisation in Turkey, Lambdaistanbul, on May 29th. The decision came after almost a year of repeated trials against the organisation.

Turkish and international human rights organisations and individual human rights defenders are outraged at the violation of the freedom of association. ILGA-Europe has expressed its support to Lambdaistanbul and raised the case with the European Commission and Parliament.

The court ruling violates the European Union accession criteria that Turkey has committed itself to follow. It also breaks the European Convention of Human Rights. The speaker of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has reminded Turkey of its human rights commitments. Also the Gay and Lesbian Intergroup of the European Parliament has reacted against the closure.

Lambdaistanbul has opened a petition "Hands off my association!" against the closure of the organisation. The petition can be found at <http://www.lambdaistanbul.org/php/imzaVer.php?imzaKampanyasiID=3>.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY, EXPRESSION AND ASSOCIATION

Riga March for Equality 2008 went ahead, but new challenges emerge

by Juris Lavrikovs, ILGA-Europe's Communications Manager

On 31 May 2008, Latvian LGBT activists and their friends and supporters from Latvia and across Europe were allowed to host a March for Equality. This year the Riga City Council and police did not even suggest banning the event, but instead created a range of new obstacles which made this year's March for Equality almost invisible and unheard to the general public. The marchers walked in the very centre of Riga, but as the last year they were isolated by metal fences and kept at a significant distance not only from about 700 protesters, but also from their supporters and simply curious individuals. The police took their duty to ensure the right to peaceful demonstration and safety of the marchers very 'seriously': they restricted traffic and pedestrian movement across almost half of Old Riga. Many potential marchers and those willing to support or simply observe the March were prevented from getting anywhere near the March. The police provided only one entry point to the March and many people were let in only after positively replying to the question posed by the police "Are you gay?"

The March took place, isolated, unseen and unheard, the police proudly reported that the March went without significant incidents and no one was hurt. The new challenge for Latvian LGBT activists and ILGA-Europe now is how to address these new and different types of obstacles when the marches and demonstrations technically taking place, but completely prevented from achieving one of their main aims – visibility for LGBT community and ability to communicate the community's concerns and demands to the wider public.

Next day after the Riga March for Equality, ILGA-Europe initiated a joint open letter to Riga mayor and Latvian Minister of Interior signed by various MEPs, politicians and representatives of numerous organisations who took part in Riga March addressing those issues. This letter as well as a comprehensive resource with other relevant statements, releases and visual materials from this year's Riga March for Equality is available on our website:

http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/guide/country_by_country/latvia/friendship_days_riga_pride_2008

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY, EXPRESSION AND ASSOCIATION

The Equality Parade has marched through the streets of Warsaw for the fourth time

Source: Polskie Radio, www.polskieradio.pl/thenews/news/?id=84284, 8 June 2008

At the parade whose motto was "Live, Love, Be" several thousand of people demonstrated against homophobia and the discrimination of the gay community.

Adam Rogalewski from the Equality Foundation said that the gay community is demanding that their rights be acknowledged, showing at the same time that its members are part of the society. According to Rogalewski, the situation of homosexuals in Poland has been improving in the last four years, that is since the first parade was organised.

As usual, there was a counter-demonstration. Members of the National Radical Camp (ONR) and the All-Polish Youth (MW) manifested too, voicing their disapproval of the parade.

However, the Warsaw police did their best to prevent the two demonstrations from coming into contact. Apart from lavish verbal abuse the demonstrations were peaceful.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY, EXPRESSION AND ASSOCIATION

Athens Pride 2008

by Evdokia Sakka

Only few days after the first gay and lesbian weddings in Greece, and while a big discussion about their legitimacy was held in society and the media, the LGBT community celebrated the 4th Athens Pride, on Saturday June 7th.

Many organisations participated: political parties, NGOs, organisations for informing and advising on HIV, the Youth Office, the Sexology Institute and other sponsors and supporters.

“It’s Our Right”: under this banner LGBT people and their friends claimed for their rights. The main issue was gay marriage. Around 3.000 people joined the Pride Parade and though a small extreme-right group tried to stop the march, throwing eggs and flour, still they went outside the City Hall to protest discrimination against LGBT people! Right after the Parade, a big party followed at Klafthmonos Square until very late, with live music, dance numbers, drag shows, well-known DJs and lots more. All visitors and the volunteers seemed to be excited. The organisers were pleased to say that this year’s Athens Pride was very successful and popular!

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY, EXPRESSION AND ASSOCIATION

Budapest Pride: police bans Pride March but promptly reverses its decision

by Juris Lavrikovs, ILGA-Europe's Communications Manager

On 11 June 2008, ILGA-Europe learned that the chief of the Budapest Police banned LGBT Pride March planned for 5 July under the pretext that the march will hinder the traffic. The pride marches were taking place in Budapest for the last decade and only during the last year's pride march its participants, among which were many ILGA-Europe's members, board and staff members who gathered in Budapest for a meeting on a new organisational strategic plan, experiences intimidations and attacks by ultra nationalists. Several people were bitten after the Pride march later in the evening.

ILGA-Europe immediately contacted the Hungarian LGBT activists and issued a statement demanding the Budapest police chief to immediately reverse his decision and to allow the pride march. Full text of our statement is available on our website:

http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/media/budapest_police_chief_bans_lgbt_pride_march

Fortunately the ban was reverse promptly and the Budapest LGBT Pride march will take place on the planned date and according to the originally planned route.

We will be monitoring the situation in Budapest and hope that the police will provide adequate protection to the participants of the March and ensures that the rights of LGBT people to freely and peacefully assemble and express their demands and concerns are not restricted and/or violated.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY, EXPRESSION AND ASSOCIATION

Sofia announced its first LGBT Pride – 28 June 2008

Source: media release by the Bulgarian Gay Organisation Gemini

Imagine now that today is not 2008, but about 10 years earlier. Leave aside that you are 10 years younger – besides now you are much more mature, you have broader perspective on life, gained quite some living experience, now you can say in a seriously manner “ten years ago the life was different...”

Imagine now that today is not 2008, but about 10 years earlier. Now the first gay pride in Tel Aviv, Israel, takes place. Fifteen years have passed from the first gay pride in Ireland. In 8 year will be organised the first pride in Moscow. The Europride has already taken place twice. There are only 3 years until the first and the most bloody till then pride march in Berlgrade, Serbia. The idea for holding Eastern European Pride is born and it will take place in June 2006, in Zagreb, Croatia. In only two years after today the first pride in Jerusalem will take place. Until the symbolic and unique first demonstration in Riga, when the march ended in a local church, there are 7 years pending. After just 4 years Poland will witness cruel violation of the humanity, when nationalistic groups throw stones and fired bottles towards the marching people in Cracow in 2003. The first pride in Bulgaria, with one of the best anti-discrimination legislations in Europe, will take place in 18 years. Or more.

The time is now. The time is this month, in Sofia, on 28 June's afternoon. We, gays, lesbians, bisexual and transgender people, have families. We dedicate this Pride to Our Families – we are fathers and daughters, mothers and sons. You don't have to be gay to join us. You don't even have to know someone, who is gay. But you must believe that we are all equal and we all have the right to live normal life with dignity!

TRANSGENDER:

Transgender people are still receiving unfavorable decisions at national court in spite of the European Court of Human Rights' decisions

by Silvan Agius, ILGA-Europe's Policy and Programmes Officer

In *Goodwin & I v. UK*, the European Court of Human Rights held that the UK's government's failure to alter the birth certificates of transsexual people or to allow them to marry in their new gender role was a breach of the European Convention on Human Rights. A number of European countries, however, are still disregard this decision and negate trans people their right to change the gender or their birth certificates and other official documents, and/or to marry in their new gender role and a whole list of other rights as shown by the *Transgender Eurostudy: Legal Survey and Focus on the Transgender Experience of Health Care*.¹

One such clear example of the negation of rights is that decision that was taken on 21st May 2008 in Malta by the *Civil Court (First Hall)*.² This decision revoked the marriage bans that were issued by the *Civil Court (Voluntary Jurisdiction)* on 12th February 2007, to allow a trans woman to get married to her partner.

The arguments for revoking the marriage bans are baffling to say the least. The Judge, in his reasoning, came to the conclusion that the changes in gender that had been effected to the birth certificate of the woman in question were only intended to protect her privacy and did not provide her with any rights pertaining to the new gender role. He further argued that the person in question cannot be considered a woman for the purpose of marriage, and that hence she cannot get married to her male partner as this would constitute a same-sex marriage, which is banned under Maltese law. Furthermore, he agreed with the argument put forward by the Public Registrar that she cannot marry a woman either, as the fact that she had undergone gender reassignment disqualified her from the possibility of entering a marriage with either gender under Maltese law!

To add insult to injury, the Court recognized that in its conclusion, it was going against the judgements of the ECtHR, but claimed that the ECtHR asserted that it is up to the State to determine when gender reassignment is complete, and that for the purposes of marriage this can never be complete.

¹ Available at [http://www.ilga-](http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/publications/non_periodical/transgender_eurostudy_legal_survey_and_focus_on_the_transgender_experience_of_health_case_april_2008)

[europe.org/europe/publications/non_periodical/transgender_eurostudy_legal_survey_and_focus_on_the_transgender_experience_of_health_case_april_2008](http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/publications/non_periodical/transgender_eurostudy_legal_survey_and_focus_on_the_transgender_experience_of_health_case_april_2008)

² See full text judgement (in Maltese) at http://docs.justice.gov.mt/SENTENZI2000_PDF/MALTA/CIVILI,%20PRIM%20AWLA/2008/2008-05-21_202-2007_49191.PDF as she was not born genetically XX

NOTICE BOARD:

Study on Media and Diversity

by Milica Pesic, Project Team Leader, EU Study of Media & Diversity

The objective of the Study is to assist in the process of promoting diversity and fighting discrimination in the media on a pan-European level.

Right now we are looking for best practice in this area by identifying the most significant and/or innovative initiatives taken by or about the media to combat discrimination and/or to promote diversity. You can find more about the Study on www.media4diversity.eu.

Your assistance would be very much appreciated if you spend some 10-15 minutes to contribute to the survey designed to identify these initiatives, which is posted on the above mentioned website, in English, French and German.

The deadline for contributions is 1 July 2008.

The initiatives will then be classified, their outcome and impact assessed, and any gaps identified. Finally, based on this research, recommendations will be submitted to the European Commission and the relevant stakeholders for further action to be taken to help promote diversity and combat discrimination in the media.

Your contribution is very important, so we hope you would find time to help. Moreover, we would kindly ask you to forward this email to any of your contacts that could contribute relevantly to this mapping exercise.

Should you have any queries please contact Farid Littleproud at the Media Diversity Institute at farid.littleproud@media-diversity.org

Tel.: +44 20 7255 2473.

NOTICE BOARD:

Give your views on a European Commission funded research, and have a chance to win up to €252 in a free prize draw!

Source: For Diversity, Against Discrimination

A group of researchers led by the Centre for Inclusion and Diversity, University of Bradford (UK), are conducting a European Commission funded 'Positive Action Measures in the European Union, Canada, United States & South Africa' (PAMECUS) research study to better understand the role that positive action measures can play in practice in preventing or remedying discrimination.

The findings from this study will contribute to a report the European Commission (Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities) is going to publish, so your professional views and comments are very much needed and appreciated.

The survey is available online in English, French and German at <http://priority-research.com/positiveaction> and there are a number of opportunities to win in a **prize draw**.

1st Prize – € 252 Voucher – selected from the first 100 respondents

2nd Prize – € 188 Voucher – selected from the next 150 respondents

3rd Prize – € 126 Voucher – selected from the next 250 respondents

Consolation Prizes – 3 x € 53 Voucher

The closing date for responses is 30 June 2008. Most responses to questions involve clicking or choosing the relevant box, or writing a short answer to a question.

The survey is being conducted by Priority Research Ltd, a Market Research Society Company Partner. If you have any technical queries regarding the survey, please e-mail support@priority-research.com.

If you require further information on any other aspect of the research, please contact: Dr Jite Eferakorho at the Centre for Inclusion and Diversity by telephone at + 44 1274 236417 or email to:

j.o.eferakorho@bradford.ac.uk.

NOTICE BOARD:

Essential reading for anyone in pursuit of equality and integration

by *Jeremy Matthys*

Diversity, equality and integration: Beyond the law – a comparative study
Roger Blanpain (ed.), ISBN 978 90 8584 730 4, Paperback (2008) – 428 pages

Exclusive offer for Euroletter subscribers!
€ 59 instead of € 65

The road toward **equality** seems to become more and more difficult as tensions between various religious and cultural groups in many countries seem to grow. Those societal tensions can only be alleviated if there is sufficient **integration** between the various cultural, religious, ethnic,... groups. At the same time, every society has an obligation to maintain and foster **diversity**: citizens must feel that they have the right to be themselves.

The task ahead is thus enormous. The goal of “equality and integration” is one of the greatest social challenges the 21st century is confronted with.

Lessons on how to fight discrimination and realise integration

This challenge was widely discussed during the International Forum on Diversity, Equality and Integration, which was held in Brussels on the 26th and the 27th of September 2007. The book **Diversity, Equality and Integration** contains the proceedings of this elaborate exchange of thoughts and opinions, most of which regard participation in the labour markets and positive action as both the answer and the key issue.

Throughout the different contributions, an array of possible **positive actions** is examined: diversity plans, anonymous solicitations, practice tests, public procurement contracts, class actions, the role of social partners, awards for model enterprises... Various grounds of discrimination (race, gender, religion, age...) are discussed as well as the issue of diversity reporting and privacy. The situation in **different countries** is thoroughly examined by means of specific country reports.

Outstanding legal scholars, civil servants, managers and trade unionists indicate how to fight different forms of **discrimination**. The lessons learned from legislation, case law, practices and experiences – on a national as

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well as transnational level – will allow to draw conclusions on how to realise integration successfully, while maintaining diversity.

Would you like to order this book and take advantage of the **exclusive 10% discount**? Send an e-mail with your contact information to publishers@vandenbroele.be.

Don't hesitate to visit our website: www.publishers.vandenbroele.be.

NOTICE BOARD:

Job opportunity with Mental Health Europe – Secretary

by Fanny Muller, Information and Human Rights Officer, Mental Health Europe

Mental Health Europe is currently looking to employ a Secretary for their office in Brussels. Deadline for application (cover letter and CV) is **30 June 2008**.

Details of the job are downloadable from mental health Europe's website:

[http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/Secretary%20vacancy_MHE\(1\).pdf](http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/Secretary%20vacancy_MHE(1).pdf).