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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

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IN THIS ISSUE:

ILGA-EUROPE:

- 12th ILGA-Europe's Annual Conference concluded in Vienna
- ILGA-Europe board member is to be Co-Secretary General of ILGA
- ILGA-Europe feedback on the European Commission's 2008 progress Reports

EUROPE:

- Launch of PACE Human Rights Prize: call for nominations

LGBT FAMILIES:

- Launch of ILGA-Europe's roving exhibition on LGBT families at the European Parliament
- Promoting the rights of children in LGBT families
- UK: The House of Commons passes groundbreaking Fertility Bill

EMPLOYMENT:

- Launch of ILGA-Europe's 'Employment Equality Network'

TRANSGENDER:

- 20 November - The Transgender Day of Remembrance
- Transgender people face fear and hate across Europe
- Transvestism 'no longer a disease' in Sweden

HATE & VIOLENCE:

- Raising awareness of homophobic and transphobic hate speech at European level
- Hungarian Parliament Adopts New Hate Speech and hate crime Legislation
- Greek gay rights activist gets sued for denouncing hate speech

NOTICE BOARD:

- Introducing the Sexual Diversity Tool Kit, a compilation of tools which can support your work on issues related to sexual diversity
- New DVD about LGBT teenagers
- ISHR call for applications for the Advanced Geneva Training Course on International Law and Advocacy

ILGA-EUROPE:

12th ILGA-Europe's Annual Conference concluded in Vienna



Source: ILGA-Europe's media release, 3 November 2008

A successful 12th annual conference of ILGA-Europe concluded in Vienna on 2 November. 230 participants from 40 countries took part in the conference. The theme of this year's conference was "Think Globally, Act Locally".

This year's conference explored the current state of the international human rights standards related to sexual orientation and gender identity and explored a vision of human rights in the next decade and the strategies needed to achieve that vision. Two conference panels included the following distinguished guests and experts:

- **Thomas Hammarberg**, Human Rights Commissioner of the Council of Europe
- **Morten Kjaerum**, Director of the Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union
- **Belinda Pyke**, Director of the European Commission's Directorate General Employment, Social Affairs and equal Opportunities
- **Professor Jack Donnelly**, Denver University, author of highly acclaimed by academics, students and human rights activists alike book "Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice".

The panels were echoed and complimented by a rich and diverse workshop programme.

The Annual Conference is also ILGA-Europe's annual general meeting and following last year's constitutional changes a new Executive Board election system was put into practice: half of the Executive Board was elected for the next two years and half for the next year. The following individuals were elected as ILGA-Europe's Executive Board (first 5 for the next two years (2008-2010), and second 5 for the next year (2008-2009):

1. **Renato Sabbadini** (Italy)
2. **Deborah Lambillotte** (Belgium)
3. **Pierre Serne** (France)

ILGA-EUROPE:

4. **Linda Freimane** (Latvia)
5. **Ruth Baldacchino** (Malta)
6. **Martin K.I. Christensen** (Denmark)
7. **Paata Sabelashvili** (Georgia)
8. **Christine Le Doaré** (France)
9. **Louise Ashworth** (UK)
10. **Tomasz Szypula** (Poland)

Natasa Sukic (Slovenia) was elected as reserve member of Executive Board.

Ruth Baldacchino and **Soren Juvas** (Sweden) were elected as European representatives on ILGA Executive Board.

Janfrans Van Der Eerden (The Netherlands) and Jackie Lewis (UK) were elected as reserve European representatives on ILGA Executive Board.

The Conference has also voted to host ILGA-Europe's Annual Conference in 2010 in The Hague (The Netherlands).

This year's Annuals Conference was co-hosted by HOSI Wien and was the first ever ILGA-Europe's Annual Conference under the patronage of a state head - **Heinz Fischer**, Federal President of the Republic of Austria, had agreed to be honorary patron of the Conference. **Dr. Maria Berger**, Federal Minister of Justice of Austria, attended the opening plenary of the Conference and delivered her greeting. A greeting to the Conference from **Barbara Prammer**, President of the National Council (Parliament) of Austria, was also read out. During the Conference the participants were invited by **Michael Häupl**, Mayor and Governor of Vienna to a reception at Vienna City Hall.

The next Annual Conference of ILGA-Europe in 2009 will be held in Malta and co-hosted by Malta Gay Rights Movement.

Further information about ILGA-Europe's Annual Conference including a report from Chairing Pool:

www.ilga-europe.org/europe/about_us/annual_conference/vienna_2008

ILGA-Europe board member is to be Co-Secretary General of ILGA

Source: ILGA-Europe's media release, 17 November 2008



On 6 November 2008, the final day of the 24th World Conference of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) in Vienna, the delegates elected Renato Sabbadini, a board member of ILGA-Europe, as male Co-Secretary General and Gloria Careagas as female Co-Secretary General of ILGA.

ILGA-Europe is proud one of its board members will now be co-leading the organisation on a global level.

Deborah Lambillotte, Co-Chair of ILGA-Europe's Executive Board said:

"We are pleased that our colleague Renato Sabbadini has been given such an honour and trust by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) activists from all over the world. Renato has been involved in the LGBT rights movement at European and international level for many years. We look forward to working with Renato and Gloria in the coming years".

Martin K.I.Christensen, Chair of ILGA-Europe's Executive Board added:

"We sincerely congratulate Renato with this important election and wishing him all the best in his new role. As Renato will no longer be a member of ILGA-Europe's Executive Board, we welcome Nataša Sukič, who was elected a reserve board member during our annual conference in Vienna, back as a full member of ILGA-Europe's Executive Board".

ILGA-EUROPE:

ILGA-Europe feedback on the European Commission's 2008 progress Reports

by Lilit Poghosyan, ILGA-Europe's Programmes and Policy Officer

The European Commission monitors annually the progress made by EU candidate and potential candidate countries in fulfilling their obligations under accession partnerships.

ILGA-Europe welcomes the way in which the human rights of LGBT people are raised in the European Commission's 2008 progress reports. In general, there is a clearly positive development as the human rights issues of LGBT people are covered more extensively and in a larger number of reports than last year (eight out of nine reports had several explicit references to LGBT issues). Also, the reports for this year cover wider scope of discrimination against LGBT people and give more concrete recommendations to the states to introduce anti-discrimination laws and policies that are in line with EU *acquis*. It is especially positive to notice that some reports refer to the discrimination faced by LGBT people in various spheres of social and economic life (medical institutions-Turkey, employment-BiH, Serbia). Another positive development is that the Commission along with appreciation of the need and the importance of anti-discrimination legislation, refers to the gap between the laws and their practical implementation (e.g. Croatia, Kosovo). There are also more explicit references to the human rights of transgender people in most of the reports.

At the same time, ILGA-Europe regrets that the Commission's 2008 progress report on Croatia does not include explicit references to the situation of LGBT people. We also, regret to see that there has been no mention of brutal attacks and violence during Sarajevo Queer Festival and Queer Belgrade Festival in September. We understand that it was probably difficult to include the incidents in the 2008 progress reports due to the fact that they happened six weeks before the reports were out. We, however, would like to see the Commission making more explicit references to the violent attacks, homophobic speeches and threats in connection with LGBT events in both BiH and Serbia in 2009 progress reports.

The inclusion of LGBT rights in most of the progress reports is to a very large part a result of active advocacy work and good cooperation between the LGBT organisations and the European Commission.

ILGA-Europe together with its partners and allies will continue the advocacy and lobby to ensure that the

ILGA-EUROPE:

Commission covers human rights issues of LGBT people in the future progress reports and incorporates them in accession partnerships with the countries.

2008 progress reports can be found online at

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/press_corner/key-documents/reports_nov_2008_en.htm

For further information contact: lilit@ilga-europe.org

Launch of PACE Human Rights Prize: call for nominations

Source: Council of Europe

On 29 October 2008, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) called for nominations for an annual Human Rights Prize, which will reward "outstanding civil society action in the defence of human rights in Europe".

Individuals and NGOs can be nominated for the prize, which will be selected by a seven-member panel from nominations put forward by at least five sponsors before 31 December 2008. The first Prize will be awarded at a ceremony in Strasbourg during the summer plenary session (22-26 June 2009) of the Assembly, which brings together 636 parliamentarians from 47 Council of Europe member states.

"We depend on civil society to 'speak truth to power' when it comes to human rights," said PACE President Lluís Maria de Puig, launching the prize. "NGOs and human rights defenders carry out difficult and sometimes dangerous work, saving lives, exposing injustice and demanding change. When it is outstanding, this work deserves to be applauded. This prize is for them."

Further information including nomination form:

<http://assembly.coe.int/main.asp?link=/Committee/JUR/HumanRightsPrize/PrizeIndex.htm>

LGBT FAMILIES:

Launch of ILGA-Europe's roving exhibition on LGBT families at the European Parliament

by Juris Lavrikovs, ILGA-Europe's Communications Manager

On 10 December, the International Human Rights Day, ILGA-Europe launches LGBT families posters exhibition at the European Parliament. The exhibition is hosted in cooperation with Hélèn Goudin, MEP and the European Parliament LGBT Rights Intergroup.

The exhibition highlights the challenges and issues LGBT families face because of the lack of legal recognition, as well as various positive developments at European level advancing the legal situation for LGBT families.

The launch will take place at 18:00 at the European Parliament: ASP, 60 rue Wiertz straat, right side. If you require a pass to the European Parliament, please contact michael.cashman-assistant@europarl.europa.eu by 5 December 2008.

LGBT FAMILIES:

Promoting the rights of children in LGBT families

by Nigel Warner, ILGA-Europe's advisor on the Council of Europe

The Council of Europe has commissioned a study into the rights and legal status of children being brought up in various forms of marital or non-marital partnership and co-habitation. The study is likely to lead eventually to a new Council of Europe standard, which could be important for the eventual recognition at the European level of the rights of children growing up in LGBT families. Accordingly ILGA Europe has commissioned a report by Dr Loveday Hodson, "The rights of children raised in lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender families: a European Perspective". This documents the existing framework of legal protection of the rights of children in LGBT families at European level, analyses the many gaps in their protection, and makes recommendations for addressing these. It has been presented to the author of the Council of Europe study, and to Council of Europe staff in Strasbourg, and will be used to raise awareness more generally around this issue at European level.

The ILGA-Europe report will almost certainly be of value to LGBT organisations and activists in the many countries in Europe where the rights of children in LGBT families are not adequately protected. It is available at the ILGA-Europe website at www.ilga-europe.org/europe/notice_board/resources/the_rights_of_children_raised_in_lesbian_gay_bisexual_or_transgender_families_a_european_perspective

LGBT FAMILIES:

UK: The House of Commons passes groundbreaking Fertility Bill

Source: media release by Stonewall, 23 October 2008

On 22 October 2008, the House of Commons voted by 355 to 129 to pass the new Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill.

'We've always thought it scandalous that lesbian couples could lawfully be excluded from the safety of NHS clinics, for which we all pay,' said Ben Summerskill, Stonewall Chief Executive. 'Often they've been forced to use unregulated backstreet services instead.'

'We're hugely grateful to everyone who has supported us over this issue. We've always remained calmly determined to present the credible scientific evidence that children in lesbian and gay families develop in exactly the same social and intellectual way as any others. But this latest step forward for our communities is an important reminder that lesbian and gay families are every bit as loving and tender, and magical, as any other. It will bring a lot of happiness to countless thousands of couples.'

There will be one final debate in the House of Lords, expected in the next week, although it will be almost impossible for peers to amend the key parts of the Bill affecting access to fertility clinics.

EMPLOYMENT:

Launch of ILGA-Europe's 'Employment Equality Network'

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

ILGA-Europe has recently launched an *Employment Equality Network*. The scope of the Network is to facilitate the sharing of information concerning events (such as seminars or conference) or tools (such as electronic publications, PowerPoint presentations, and relevant websites) and other information that has direct relevance for those working towards LGBT employment equality. Through this *Network*, ILGA-Europe also aims to facilitate transnational co-operations that have already proved very successful in the past.

The *Network* was launched during the Employment Seminar that ILGA-Europe held during early October this year. Its current members include members of LGBT NGOs, trade unionists focusing on LGBT equality, and members of LGBT employee networks amongst other.

Should you wish to subscribe to this network or learn more about it, kindly send an email to:

employment@ilga-europe.org

TRANSGENDER:

20 November - The Transgender Day of Remembrance

Source: ILGA-Europe's media release, 18 November 2008

On 20 November 2008, the 9th Annual Transgender Day of Remembrance will be marked across the world and Europe. This Day was established following a murder of Rita Hester in 1998 and serves as a reminder of existing prejudice, hatred and discrimination against transgender people.

There is still a lot of ignorance about and discrimination against transgender people in Europe and this leads to their marginalisation and invisibility in society. Transsexual people often lose their jobs during or soon after they undergo gender reassignment procedures. They experience substantial discrimination in healthcare issues and suffer from poor legislation at national level as ILGA-Europe/Transgender Europe report published in April 2008 reveals (1). Gender non-conformity is still used as an excuse for harassment, violence, and even murder of transgender people – several such cases have been reported through the past year alone across Europe.

At the same time there are positive development and growing awareness and embracement of transgender people's rights at European institutions level. The report on homophobia and sexual orientation discrimination in the EU by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency published in June 2008 identified serious gaps in national legislation in regards to transgender people's rights (2).

Thomas Hammarberg, the Human Rights Commissioner of the Council of Europe, who earlier this month attended ILGA-Europe's annual conference in Vienna, actively promotes the rights of transgender people and on 18 November organised a specific full day meeting with experts in the field addressing the issues and devise a work programme to tackle discrimination against transgender people. Patricia Prendiville, Executive Director of ILGA-Europe, was among the invited European stakeholders at that meeting. On 20 November Thomas Hammarberg also organises a workshop on homophobia for national human rights institutions and Patricia Prendiville is going to raise specifically the issues of transphobia and discrimination against transgender people.

Martin K.I Christensen, Co-Chair of ILGA-Europe Executive Board, said:

"ILGA-Europe and its allies have done a lot of work to advance the rights of transgender people in Europe. Obviously there is still a lot of work to be done and we are only beginning to properly address the issues and work towards solutions. We welcome the fact that more European institutions embrace the issue and take practical steps towards elimination of discrimination and prejudice of transgender people in Europe and look forward working with all the allies for full and unconditional rights for transgender people in Europe."

TRANSGENDER:

(1) Transgender EuroStudy: Legal Survey and Focus on the Transgender Experience of Health Care (April 2008) is available on www.ilga-europe.org/europe/publications/non_periodical/transgender_eurostudy_legal_survey_and_focus_on_the_transgender_experience_of_health_care_april_2008

(2) "Homophobia and Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation in the EU Member States Part I – Legal Analysis", available on http://fra.europa.eu/fra/index.php?fuseaction=content.dsp_cat_content&catid=3fb38ad3e22bb&contentid=4868b375493cf

TRANSGENDER:

Transgender people face fear and hate across Europe

by Leigh Phillips, EUobserver.com, 21 November 2008,
<http://euobserver.com/9/27162>

Attitudes towards gays and lesbians in much of Europe and around the world may have made remarkable advances over the last 20 years, even if some regions of the EU are more hospitable than others. But for transgender people, discrimination, marginalisation and outright hostility remain part of daily experience.

Transsexual people are often fired from their jobs when undergoing gender reassignment procedures. They are turfed out of their apartments, refused insurance and confronted with bigotry within the health community. Gender non-conformity is still used as an excuse for harassment, violence and even murder

A report on homophobia and sexual orientation discrimination in the 27-country bloc by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency published in June 2008 identified serious gaps in national legislation in regards to transgender people's rights

On Thursday (20 November), transgender people around the world observed the annual Transgender Day of Remembrance, held to remember the murder of Rita Hester, a transgender woman from Boston, and all other transgender people who have been killed because they do not fit into the traditional mould. Ms Hester's murder - like most anti-transgender murder cases - has yet to be solved.

The Council of Europe, the Strasbourg-based European integration organisation - not to be confused with the Council of the European Union - has recently taken up the cause of promoting transgender rights across Europe.

On the day of remembrance, the EUobserver spoke to Thomas Hammarberg, the council's human rights commissioner.

Full article is available at <http://euobserver.com/9/27162>

TRANSGENDER:

Transvestism 'no longer a disease' in Sweden

*Source: The Local, 17 November 2008,
<http://www.thelocal.se/15728/20081117/>*

Transvestism, along with six other sexual behaviours, will be struck from Sweden's official list of medical diagnoses starting on January 1st, 2009. The National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen) took the decision to declassify the behaviours as illnesses in order to avoid strengthening prejudices about them, said agency head Lars-Erik Holm.

"We don't want to contribute to certain sexual behaviours being thought of as diseases. These individuals' sexual preferences have nothing to do with society," he explained in the Dagens Nyheter (DN) newspaper.

In reality, Sweden's medical diagnosis system is used to gather statistics about the healthcare system. However, people have come to view the listing as a registry of accepted diseases.

The other diagnoses which will soon disappear from the disease registry include fetishism, fetishistic transvestitism, sadomasochism, gender identity disorder in youth, and multiple disorders of sexual preferences.

Holm said that the changes emphasize that these behaviours are illnesses in and of themselves, nor are they something perverse. "These diagnoses are rooted in a time when everything other than the heterosexual missionary position were seen as sexual perversions," he said.

It was 30 years ago when Socialstyrelsen took a similar step in removing homosexuality from Sweden's list of diagnoses.

The agency's decision was met with joy by transvestite Sara Lund/Claes Schmidt, who is known as Sara-Claes. "We've been fighting for this for a long so this is really great news," said Sara-Claes.

HATE & VIOLENCE:

Raising awareness of homophobic and transphobic hate speech at European level

by Nigel Warner, ILGA-Europe's advisor on the Council of Europe

ILGA-Europe has published a report "Human Rights + Responsibility + Respect". This raises concerns about culturally and religiously based hate speech among politicians and faith leaders, and makes suggestions for actions at European and national level to address these concerns, particularly in the context of intercultural dialogue.

The report was prepared as a contribution to an intergovernmental conference organised by the Council of Europe on November 12/13 2008: "Human Rights in Culturally Diverse Societies: challenges and perspectives", which featured workshops on hate speech, freedom of assembly, and freedom of religion. The report was intended to raise awareness among government delegates, academics and other participants, and contribute to the discussion of solutions.

The report documents numerous examples of hate speech by senior political and faith leaders, including a Prime Minister and deputy prime minister, chairpersons of parliamentary human rights committees, mayors of major cities, an MEP, the late Pope, Catholic cardinals and Orthodox patriarchates, and shows how they contribute directly or indirectly to a climate of hate, violence and intolerance against LGBT people.

The report is available on our website:

www.ilga-europe.org/europe/notice_board/resources/human_rights_responsibility_respect

HATE & VIOLENCE:

Hungarian Parliament Adopts New Hate Speech and hate crime Legislation

by *Tamas Dombos*

The Hungarian Parliament has adopted today two new pieces of legislation concerning LGBT people. The first one extends hate crime legislation to cover hate motivated crimes committed against a member of a group other than national, ethnic, or religious: from now on the Criminal Code contains a general formulation 'Violent act against a member of a social group', which is believed to include groups based on sexual orientation as well. The second piece of legislation makes it possible to initiate civil proceedings against a person who engages in degrading or intimidating behavior towards groups based on nationality, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation.

Following the violent attacks at Gay Pride Marches in the past two years, and several other violent demonstrations by the same extreme right wing groups, the Hungarian Government prepared a bill on the protection of public order. The bill contains various amendments to the Criminal Code relating to public demonstrations. Upon the lobbying efforts of various LGBT and human rights organizations the bill also contains a rewording of the offense 'Violent act against a member of a national, ethnic or religious group'. The new formulation renames the offense 'Violent act against a member of a social group', retains the specific mentioning of national, ethnic and religious groups, but opens up the groups covered by the legislation by adding the general category 'other social group'. The new wording is believed to be applicable to sexual minorities, although government officials shied away from mentioning LGBT people in the explanation of the bill or the parliamentary debate. The bill was passed 210-162-6, the governing Hungarian Socialist Party and its former junior coalition partner Alliance of Free Democrats voted for the law, the moderate conservative Hungarian Democratic Forum abstained, while the other right wing opposition parties voted against it.

As part of the same package the Government also prepared new legislation on hate speech. Currently, the Criminal Code contains the offense 'Incitement to hatred' which covers national, ethnic and religious groups, as well as the general category of 'other social groups', but the courts tend to interpret this offense very restrictively to cases where such behavior directly leads to violence. The Socialist Government adopted several bills in the past years to sanction less severe forms of hate speech, but all attempts have been struck down by the Constitutional Court claiming an unconstitutional limitation of the freedom of speech. The new

HATE & VIOLENCE:

legislation which is believed to conform to the standards set by the Constitutional Court offers a civil law solution to hate speech: members of a group subjected to degrading or intimidating behavior can initiate civil proceedings against the offender. The law also contains specific provisions to combine claims by different individuals related to the same offense. The law explicitly mentions groups based on nationality, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation as groups protected by the legislation. The bill was passed 214-162-1, the governing Hungarian Socialist Party, its former junior coalition partner Alliance of Free Democrats and the moderate conservative Hungarian Democratic Forum voted for the law, while the other right wing opposition parties voted against it.

The future of the adopted laws, however, is hard to predict. Former head of the Constitutional Court, now President of the Republic, László Sólyom has vetoed previous attempts to regulate hate speech, and the Constitutional Court adopted a one-sidedly freedom of speech perspective on the issue. Several provisions of the bill on public order (although not the one on hate crimes) have also been criticized by human rights organisations. Whether the laws adopted will stand the test of the President and the Constitutional Court is yet to be seen.

HATE CRIME & VIOLENCE:

Greek gay rights activist gets sued for denouncing hate speech

Source: www.10percent.gr

Hate speech against gays, lesbians and transgender people in Greece takes place with impunity. Several leading politicians, ministers, and religious leaders, as well as several journalists and other public figures, repeatedly insult and demean gays and lesbians without any legal or disciplinary consequences.

The latest example is the bishop of the Piraeus, Seraphim, who in an article maligned gays as 'morally corrupt, obsessed with satisfying their psychopathological deviation and who have made a life value out of the faeces elimination tract'. Such is Seraphim's hatred against gays that he supports the claims of an alleged murderer. The bishop said that the popular Greek actor Nikos Seryanopoulos, who was murdered in what seems to be a homophobic crime, brought this on himself because, according to the alleged murderer, Seryanopoulos forced him to have sex, and him not being 'that way' got upset and defended himself by stabbing the actor 21 times.

You can offer your support to the Greek gay rights activist Leo Kalovyrnas and the non-governmental organisation Synthesis HIV/AIDS Awareness who were recently sued for a 1 million euro in defamation charges after denouncing Greek-Orthodox bishop Seraphim's misanthropic and homophobic hate speech. The trial has been set for 2 February 2009.

Please sign our petition to the Greek Government to ban hate speech against the Gay, Lesbian and Transexual community in Greece by changing the anti-discrimination law 927/1979 so as to cover hate crimes against the Greek LGBT community.

Petition is available here:

www.10percent.gr/stiles/koinotita/synthesis/527-2008-10-19-18-34-11.html

NOTICE BOARD:

Introducing the Sexual Diversity Tool Kit, a compilation of tools which can support your work on issues related to sexual diversity

Source: International Planned Parenthood Federation

The **Sexual Diversity Survey for Staff** is designed to assess attitudes, knowledge, and practices of staff related to work with sexually diverse populations. A database, codebook and answer key are available to facilitate analysis. Survey findings can inform training and sensitization content and help assess project outcomes. The process also creates dialogue and poses important questions about sexual diversity.

The **Sexual Diversity Indicators Guide** offers a wide range of indicators useful for planning, monitoring, and evaluating projects which focus on sexually diverse populations. The indicators fall into categories of policies, partnerships and referrals, quality of care, service provision, information, education and communication, service promotion, and advocacy.

The **Agency Readiness Index to Work with LGBT Youth and Adults** is an adaptation of a tool created by the National Network for Youth to help agencies assess their ability to work with LGBT youth. This version focuses on sexual and reproductive health service provision for LGBT people of all ages. The Index includes self-assessment, scoring, and development of an action plan in the areas of: leadership, policies and procedures, human resources, staff knowledge and development, climate/environment, sexual and reproductive health programs, and community relations.

The Toolkit is available here: www.ippfwhr.org/site/c.kuLRJ5MTKvH/b.4619607/

NOTICE BOARD:

New DVD about LGBT teenagers

Source: media release by Leeds Animation, 19 November 2009

OUT TO THE FAMILY is a 15-minute animated DVD produced by Leeds Animation Workshop, a non-profit-making co-operative company that has been making film and video resources for thirty years. Dealing with social issues including equal rights and family problems, the films are commended for their success in raising awareness, introducing a subject, or starting a discussion.

This animated DVD shows six families, from a wide range of backgrounds, each coming to terms with the developing sexual or gender identity of a son or daughter. It aims to help parents and others understand more about the issues facing their teenagers, and how best to help them.

Further information and purchase: www.leedsanimation.org.uk

NOTICE BOARD:

ISHR call for applications for the Advanced Geneva Training Course on International Law and Advocacy

by International Service for Human Rights

The International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) is opening the call for applications for the Advanced Geneva Training Course on International Law and Advocacy to be held in Geneva from 16 to 27 March 2009.

Please find call for applications, detailing the course's aims and objectives, and the application form on our website at www.ishr.ch

The deadline for application is 1 December 2008.