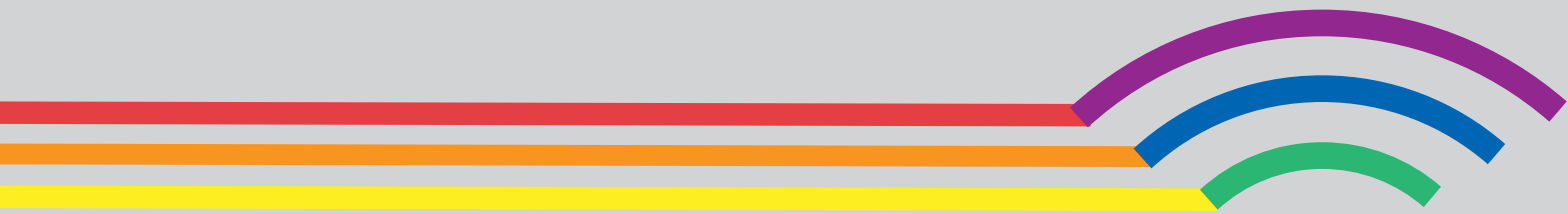


No. 173
January 2010

ILGA
EUROPE 

EURO-LETTER

ILGA-Europe's monthly electronic LGBT political
and legal news bulletin



ISSN 1998-8117

Editor:

Juris Lavrikovs

Contact us:

euroletter@ilga-europe.org

Subscribe to Euro-Letter:

simply send an empty message to euroletter-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

If you no longer wish to receive Euroletter simply send empty message to euroletter-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com

Previous issues:

all previous Euro-Letters in English as well as the Greek translations from No 127, January 2006 are available in pdf format on our website: www.ilga-europe.org/europe/publications/euro_letter

ILGA-Europe is grateful to **Pantelis Ravidas**, **Danae Panagiotopoulou** and **Evdokia Sakka** for the Greek translations.



This publication is supported by the Directorate-General for Employment, social affairs and equal opportunities of the European Commission.

Its funding is provided for under the European Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (2007-2013). This programme was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment and social affairs area, as set out in the Social Agenda, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy goals in these fields.

The seven-year Programme targets all stake holders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA-EEA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

PROGRESS mission is to strengthen the EU contribution in support of Member States' commitments and efforts to create more and better jobs and to build a more cohesive society. To that effect, PROGRESS will be instrumental in:

- providing analysis and policy advice on PROGRESS policy areas;
- monitoring and reporting on the implementation of EU legislation and policies in PROGRESS policy areas;
- promoting policy transfer, learning and support among Member States on EU objectives and priorities; and
- 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.

IN THIS ISSUE:



ILGA-EUROPE:

- ILGA-Europe's new advocacy project in the Western Balkans
- Setting advocacy goals to improve situation of LGBTQ people in Armenia

EUROPE:

- Commissioner-Designates' promises on human rights
- Documentary on multiple identities/discrimination

LGBT FAMILIES:

- Portuguese Parliament approves same-sex marriage

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION:

- Call for action: Protect freedom of association for LGBT rights activists in Turkey

HATE & VIOLENCE:

- ILGA-Europe publishes a note on opportunities for reporting in 2010

EDUCATION:

- Lithuanian Parliament amends homophobic law
- UK: First ever film for schools to tackle homophobia will be sent to every secondary school
- School Agenda 2010: Promote and protect fundamental rights in the EU

NOTICE BOARD:

- Call for papers - Sexual Orientation, Diversity and Equality in Organisations: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Heterosexual Perspectives
- Call for papers - "Equal is not enough" Conference: "Challenging differences and inequalities in contemporary societies"
- New publication – The Little Green Book on LGBT
- Seminar: Gendered Citizenship in Multicultural Europe: Issues, Challenges, Visions, 22 April 2010, Brussels



ILGA-Europe's new advocacy project in the Western Balkans

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

ILGA-Europe has launched a project called 'Step up! Stronger LGBT movements for equality in the Western Balkans'. The project will be implemented between January 2010 and December 2012 and is supported by the Open Society Institute and the European Commission.

ILGA-Europe has conducted number of similar projects in the past, the most recent one being 'Take action! United against LGBT discrimination in Eastern Europe' project.

Current project seeks to build on the success of the previous projects and aims to:

1. To increase/ build the capacities of the local LGBT organisations in the fields of organisational management, documentation of human rights violations and advocacy.
2. To advocate at national and European level (using the documented evidence of discrimination) for improved legal protection and social acceptance of LGBT people in the project countries.

Objectives set in the project will be met through a verity of means, including trainings, coaching, study/lobby visits, advocacy campaigns, litigations, lobby meetings, etc. To be relevant the activities will respond to the voiced needs of partner organisations and meet the challenges imposed by the local context.

The main partners of the project are already identified. 3 additional partners will soon be selected by the panel of ILGA-Europe staff and board members.

Read more about the project on our website:

www.ilga-europe.org/europe/campaigns_projects/step_up_stronger_lgbt_movements_for_equality_in_western_balkans



Setting advocacy goals to improve situation of LGBTQ people in Armenia

by Beth Fernandez, ILGA-Europe's Programmes & Policy Officer

From 18th to 20th December in Arzakhan (Armenia) ILGA-Europe conducted an advocacy planning session with 10 staff, board members and volunteers of Armenian LGBTQ organisation We for Civil Equality.

The planning session guided participants through defining advocacy for their organization, prioritizing problems suitable for addressing with advocacy methods, formulating advocacy objectives, identifying key audiences, and defining activities. A final session was devoted to principles of effective communication.

WFCE produced an advocacy plan with two main advocacy objectives for the coming years – to improve tolerance towards LGBTQ people in Armenian society and to increase legal protection of LGBT people.

We for Civil Equality was established in 2003. The organisation's mission is to change societal attitudes towards LGBTQ people in Armenia by:

- enhancing knowledge on sexual orientation and gender expression and gender identity,
- lobbying and advocating for the human rights of LGBTQ people,
- creating safe and supportive environment for self integration into mainstream society,
- providing information and education to prevent the spread of STI/HIV/AIDS among MSM and WSW groups

We are looking forward to working with WFCE on the implementation of their plan.

The training took place with the Precis project, a five year project implemented with COC-Netherlands and GenderDocM and partners in seven countries. ILGA-Europe have previously conducted such trainings in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine. A further training for Kazakh LGBT organisation Amulet is planned for March 2010.



Commissioner-Designates' promises on human rights

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

ILGA-Europe watched carefully the hearings of the Commissioner-Designates during their European Parliament¹, and the key outcomes from the LGBT rights perspective are the following:

Viviane Reding, Commissioner-Designate for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, was twice asked LGBT specific questions. Her answers were encouraging as she insisted that she is commitment towards ensuring full freedom of movement of citizens, and increased mutual recognition of all familial relationships within the European Union. On hate and violence against LGBT people she responded that, "Homophobia has no place in Europe". Moreover, she stated that she will make sure that the Charter of Fundamental Rights' is fully implemented.²

Cecilia Malmström, Commissioner-Designate for Home Affairs was very clear on her commitment to fundamental rights throughout her interview. She expressed regret that the new anti-discrimination directive has not yet been adopted, and shown that she intends to work very closely with Viviane Reding on fundamental rights issues.

Štefan Füle, Commissioner-designate for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy and **Andris Piebalgs**, Commissioner-Designate for Development have both indicated that they will stick to the European values of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the EU Neighbourhood Policy and the policy on development aid respectively.

Catherine Ashton, Commissioner-Designate for External Relations was not asked any LGBT specific questions. However, her inclusion of a reference in the CV to the 2006 Politician of the Year Award that she received from Stonewall shows her continued commitment to LGBT rights.

László Andor, Commissioner-Designate for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion was not asked specific human rights questions during his hearing, but his commitment to social issues should show that he too would progress equality for all as a Commissioner.

Finally, **John Dalli**, Commissioner-Designate for Health and Consumer Policy, made repeated references to his commitment to disease prevention during his hearing without a similar emphasis on wellbeing, thus raising concern that his notion of health may be very narrow. The Malta Gay Rights Movement have also raised concerns about his track record on his lack of commitment towards transgender healthcare.

¹ The full interviews are still available online at the European Parliament website <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/hearings/commissioners/getHomePage.htm?language=EN>

² Read the full ILGA-Europe's press release at http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/media/viviane_reding_a_candidate_for_a_post_of_eu_commissioner_for_justice_fundamental_rights_citizenship_give_s_encouraging_answers



Documentary on multiple identities/discrimination

Source: European Commission

The jigsaw of identity: one person, many pieces: released on the occasion of the Equality Summit in Stockholm, 16–17 November 2009, this film explores the theme of identity within the context of our societies where prejudices and stereotyping are commonplace and promoting the values of a diverse society remains a constant challenge. Through looking at the lives of three different personalities at ease with the many aspects of their identity and their place in society, the film inspires viewers to reflect upon how they see themselves and how others see them.

The film was produced with the cooperation of AGE - the European Older People's Platform, the European Disability Forum (EDF), the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), ILGA Europe – the European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA), and the European Youth Forum (YFJ).

You can view it on our YouTube channel:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/ilgaeurope#p/u/0/LFUh8QTB5pU>



Portuguese Parliament approves same-sex marriage

by Paulo Côrte-Real, Associação ILGA PORTUGAL

On January 8th 2010, history was made with the approval in the Portuguese Parliament of legislation that ensures equal access to marriage.

Left-wing parties supported the proposal put forth by the Socialist Government, and presented in Parliament by the Prime-Minister, José Sócrates. They also rejected the main right-wing party's 'separate-but-equal' proposal of a registered partnership for same-sex couples, as well as the possibility - also supported by right-wing parties - of holding a national referendum on this issue.

There was, however, division in left-of-center parties regarding adoption. Even though the Left Bloc and the Green Party submitted proposals of equal access to marriage that would not exclude same-sex couples from adoption, these were rejected by all other parties. The law that was approved rules out the possibility of adoption, reaffirming a refusal to legally recognize same-sex parenting. In fact, since 2001, unregistered civil unions have been recognized for all couples, but same-sex couples are not able to adopt; and, since 2006, medically assisted reproduction legislation also excludes lesbian couples. Parental rights are therefore an issue that Portugal will need to address soon, so that all families enjoy equal protection under the law.

The new law is currently undergoing a discussion in committee that will at most introduce minor technical changes and, after a final vote in Parliament, it will be sent to the President, Aníbal Cavaco Silva. The President can ratify or veto the law, but a veto can be overturned by Parliament; he can also send it to the Constitutional Court, that has already considered in a previous ruling that same-sex marriage was not against the Constitution.

Same-sex marriage is therefore expected to be possible in Portugal within the next few months – and the vote in Parliament was clearly a landmark in the fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation. Portugal can now become the 6th country in Europe (and 8th in the world) to have equal access to marriage, helping to set an example for many other countries that have yet to take this crucial step.

Martin K.I. Christensen, Co-Chair of the ILGA-Europe's Executive Board, said: "It is truly a fantastic start of 2010 for LGBT people in Portugal and Europe as a whole. It is clear that a European consensus is fast emerging on marriage equality."

Linda Freimane, Co-Chair of the ILGA-Europe's Executive Board, continues: "We have to cross our fingers for the ratification, and certainly not forget that there still is a fight for full equality – and that is also including entitlement to adoption."



Call for action: Protect freedom of association for LGBT rights activists in Turkey

by KAOS

In February 2010, a prominent LGBT rights organisation in Turkey may be forced to shut down. The Turkish authorities have been publicly opposed to the organisation's work on behalf of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals.

The Black Pink Triangle Association of Izmir (Siyah Pembe Ucgen Izmir) is accused of acting illegally and against public morality by refusing to amend its official charter, which affirms the right of LGBT individuals to enjoy a life of peace and equality. Attempts to close gay rights organizations are not new in Turkey. Public officials have unsuccessfully challenged the activities of three groups in courts since 2005.

KAOS urges the presiding Judge to impartially adjudicate the motion to close the Black Pink Triangle Association of Izmir. Sample letter is available at:

<http://news.kaosgl.com/item/329>



ILGA-Europe publishes a note on opportunities for reporting in 2010

by Joël Le Déroff, ILGA-Europe's Policy & Programmes Officer

Reporting and monitoring are necessary to raise awareness within national and European institutions, among law enforcement officers and in the public. Developing a reporting and monitoring strategy is a condition for an efficient advocacy.

Some institutions have stressed the importance of reporting. According to the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, *"Member States should consider developing simple and inclusive operational definitions of hate crime [...]. In addition, effective tools should be developed to facilitate reporting, such as self-report forms and third party reporting facilities."*

Similarly, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) recently adopted a decision calling on the participating States to *"collect, maintain and make public, reliable data and statistics in sufficient detail on hate crimes and violent manifestations of intolerance"*.

However, initiatives in that field more than often come from Human Rights defenders and NGOs. In the frame of our strategy against homophobic and transphobic violence, we aim at further reinforcing our efforts and our coordination with our members, keeping in mind a comprehensive picture of the existing reporting mechanisms.

For this reason, ILGA-Europe decided to publish a briefing note that lists the main periodical opportunities for submissions to the European and international institutions: the Universal Periodical Review of the UN Human Rights Council, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe and the European Union.

If your organisation is planning to submit contributions to one of the organisations mentioned in this note, we would like to kindly ask you if you can send us a copy of it. However, joint submissions by national and European NGOs together can have a stronger impact, and ILGA-Europe will be more than happy to consider proposals for joint submissions with member organisations.

Let's work together in 2010!

This briefing is available on our website:

www.ilga-europe.org/europe/campaigns_projects/combating_hate_crime/strategies_to_tackle_homophobic_and_transphobic_violence/report_and_monitor_hate_crime_submissions_to_european_and_international_institutions



Lithuanian Parliament amends homophobic law

Source: BNS, 22 December 2009

The Lithuanian Seimas adopted amendments to the Law on the Protection of Minors against the Detrimental Effects of Public Information to replace provisions in the previous edition which were deemed homophobic.

The new bill bans information that could be seen as promoting sexual relations from reaching the country's youth. The new piece of legislation is also free from the provision in the earlier amendments that banned information that promotes "homosexual, bisexual or polygamous relations" to minors, which was subject to ardent criticism.

Some 58 MPs voted in favor of adopting the adjusted amendments, four voted against and 25 abstained.

Members of the ruling Homeland Union - Lithuanian Christian Democrat Party, the National Resurrection Party, the Liberal and Center Union factions voted in favor of the amendments, while those of another partner in the ruling bloc - the Liberal Movement - didn't take part in the vote. The opposition also contributed support to the bill, drawing the votes of some members of the Social Democrat and the Labor parliamentary groups.

This is the second time the Seimas mulls the draft so-called censorship law. The first time around it agreed to back conservative Gintaras Songaila's proposal to deem detrimental all information that promotes the country's youth to engage in homosexual, bisexual or polygamous relations. The parliament's bid to re-enter the said provisions brought the draft piece of legislation back on the Education Science and Culture Committee desk.

The committee instead voted to back an accommodated version of the bill by including a provision proposed by Mantas Varaska of the United Lithuania faction, which bans information promoting of any kind of sexual relations if it can be accessed by the underage population. The Seimas opted to approve the trade-off version as well.

The said provision comes as less permissive option than that proposed by a task force specially appointed to amend the controversial bill by President Dalia Grybauskaite, which proposed banning promotion of underage sexual relations.

The committee also included in the bill and the Seimas backed a provision to keep from the youth information that campaigns for a different than the officially embedded concept of family.

The Seimas has been at this bill since July, when MPs opted to include an amendment banning promotion of homosexual, bisexual or polygamous relations.

EDUCATION:



This provision was deemed homophobic and slammed by human rights watchdogs, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. Former president Valdas Adamkus vetoed the bill, but the Seimas voted to override it.

In September, the EP passed a resolution, urging Lithuania to reconsider the law.

A task force set up by Grybauskaite to improve the much debated the piece of legislation proposed its own amendments to the adopted bill, which is yet to go into force.



UK: First ever film for schools to tackle homophobia will be sent to every secondary school

Source: Media release by Stonewall, 22 January 2010

In February, Stonewall will send every secondary school in Britain a copy of its DVD FIT - the first feature film for schools to tackle homophobic bullying.

FIT – Stonewall’s film for schools - is an intelligent, powerful and entertaining film. The storyline uses hip-hop, humour, colourful Adidas tracksuits and lively writing similar to Channel 4’s *Skins* to communicate with pupils in a way that makes it easy for them to engage with the issues raised.

The interactive DVD has been devised to tackle homophobic bullying and encourage pupils to challenge their widespread use of the word ‘gay’ to mean anything rubbish or inadequate. It gives further support to teachers who have recently reported being extremely under-resourced in tackling homophobic bullying in their schools.

Recent YouGov research for Stonewall found that nine in ten secondary school teachers said pupils currently experience homophobic bullying in their schools. Yet nine in ten teachers have never received any specific training on how to tackle the problem. One in five secondary school teachers said they would not feel comfortable addressing gay issues in the classroom and one in six said they would not feel confident responding if a pupil were to ask questions regarding gay issues.

FIT is an adaptation of Stonewall’s highly successful play for schools, which was seen on tour by 20,000 pupils in Britain in 2008-9. Pupil reactions to the play demonstrate how effective it has been in encouraging them to reassess their prejudices. Navdeep, a year 8 pupil at a south London school, said: ‘After watching FIT, we realised it was wrong to use the word gay as a cuss word. You shouldn’t outcast your friend if they’re gay.’

Chris Gibbons, Stonewall’s Senior Education Officer, said: ‘Overwhelming positive response to FIT as a touring play – from pupils and teachers alike – convinced us that a feature film would help every secondary school in Britain to challenge homophobic bullying. Teachers are still ill-equipped and unsure of how to deal with gay issues in their classrooms. Stonewall’s film for schools will help plug this gap.’

Writer / director of FIT Rikki Beadle-Blair said: ‘When on tour I would ask the kids how many people thought homosexuality was wrong. In every single school the vast majority, about 80%, would put their hands up. But kids would come up after the performance and say quite openly “I walked into this room homophobic and will leave it a changed person.”’

FIT was produced with the support of a consortium of funders and will be sent out to every secondary school by the end of February with the support of the teachers’ union NASUWT. For more info visit

www.stonewall.org.uk/FIT



School Agenda 2010: Promote and protect fundamental rights in the EU

Source: Fundamental Rights Agency

For the third year running, the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) is releasing its extremely popular awareness raising calendar for young people. The School Agenda, available in English, German and French, is intended to help young people to learn about fundamental rights issues in the EU in the classroom and at home.

Would you like to know more about how to combat discrimination, homophobia and how to promote and protect rights? This year's edition provides helpful definitions, examples and personal stories as well as a wide range of useful tools, such as the "human rights temperature" test, a glossary, and tips about how to fight discrimination.

Its a useful tool supporting young people to keep track of their **daily activities** and **homework** and help to **promote and protect fundamental rights in the EU**.

Download or order your personal copy of the agenda for free on
http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/scoolagenda/scoolagenda_en.htm



Call for papers - Sexual Orientation, Diversity and Equality in Organisations: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Heterosexual Perspectives

by Fiona Colgan, London Metropolitan University

Conference: Equality, Diversity, Inclusion Conference, 14-16 July 2010, Vienna, Austria

Sexual orientation is an issue of growing importance for organizations. It has become an important source of employee and customer diversity, as people increasingly feel able to self-identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual in organizations and society. The legislative and policy framework concerning equality and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation has been undergoing a transformation in many parts of the world including the European Union, Australia and New Zealand, South Africa, Canada and in parts of the United States. Where strong legislation protecting the rights of LGB people has been introduced, including the right for a legal partnership, attitudes towards LGB people have been found to be more positive and inclusive. However, despite a liberalisation in social attitudes and a more comprehensive anti-discrimination legislative framework in many parts of the world, research indicates that heterosexism and homophobia remain problematic.

Although sexuality pervades every aspect of organisation and society, this is still not conventionally acknowledged. The stream aims to consider the implications of the growing visibility of the sexual orientation strand for individuals and organisations. Dunne (2000) suggests the importance of moving beyond a 'theoretical heterosexism' in studies of organisations, work and family life. We would welcome theoretical, discussion and empirical papers from researchers and practitioners from a range of disciplines/fields who would like to explore themes on sexual orientation and sexuality. It welcomes a focus on heterosexual, lesbian, gay and bisexual perspectives on the transformations taking place. For more information on submitting an abstract go to <http://www.edi-conference.org/streams.php>

Abstracts (300 words) should be submitted electronically by 1st May 2010.

In general, paper presentations at the conference will be a maximum of 20 minutes long, with 10 minutes for questions and discussion. Data projectors will be available in each conference room.



Call for papers - "Equal is not enough" Conference: "Challenging differences and inequalities in contemporary societies"

by Joz Motmans

Abstracts should be sent to equalisnotenough@ua.ac.be by 1 March 2010 at the latest. All information about the conference and suggested topics can be found on the conference website:

www.equalisnotenough.org

New publication – The Little Green Book on LGBT

by LGBT Denmark

New educational materials produced by LGBT Denmark on sexual orientation and gender identity. Available on our website:

www.ilga-europe.org/europe/guide/country_by_country/denmark/the_little_green_book_on_lgbt



Seminar: Gendered Citizenship in Multicultural Europe: Issues, Challenges, Visions, 22 April 2010, Brussels

by FEMCIT

FEMCIT is the research project Gendered Citizenship in Multicultural Europe: The Impact of Contemporary Women's Movements. The FEMCIT project explores the relationship between the changing forms and practices of gendered citizenship, and women's movements in various European countries over the last forty years. FEMCIT is a four-year project (2007-2011) and is funded under the Sixth Framework Program of the European Commission.

The seminar will bring together policy makers, politicians, NGOs, and researchers to discuss central questions of current European policy-making, such as:

- What are the challenges faced by women representatives in political life?
- How do the categories of ethnicity and gender intersect in work-life?
- How has intimate life been transformed for those living outside of conventional families?
- ***What does citizenship mean for women from specific ethnic backgrounds?***

At this seminar, leading scholars from across Europe will present the key findings of the FEMCIT project, drawing on their extensive research exploring six dimensions of citizenship: political, social, economic, ethnic/religious, bodily and intimate citizenship. The presentations will be followed by commentaries from a high profile panel of experts.

Further information: Siren.hogtun@uni.no