

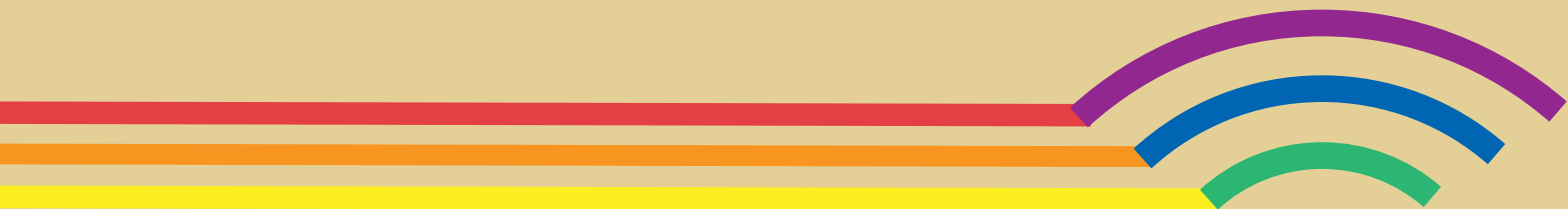
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The seven-year Programme targets all stake holders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA-EEA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

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- 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.

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Consultation on ILGA-Europe's Next Strategic Plan

by Evelyne Paradis, ILGA-Europe's Executive Director

Dear European members of ILGA,

As ILGA-Europe enters the third and last year of its second Strategic Plan (2008-2011), we embark on the development of our next three-year plan.

As a membership-based organisation, **the participation of members in this process is of particular importance**. Without significant input from a range of members from all parts of Europe, it is not possible to produce a Strategic Plan which we all feel ownership of and that truly reflects both the common and diverse needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people in the European region.

The attached questionnaire is the **first step in membership consultation** and involvement in ILGA-Europe's strategic planning process. You will find more information about the timeline of the process in the background document¹. Please note that we will be sending out an invitation soon for the Strategic Planning Session in Tallinn on 12 and 13 June.

About the questionnaire:

- The aim of this first phase of consultation is to seek input from member organisations on what the priority issues should be over the next three years. This consultation is open to all members of the European region of ILGA – ILGA-Europe.
- The questionnaire is not very long. It should take you less than 15 minutes to fill in. If you have more time, there is space for additional feedback on priority issues and strategies adopted by ILGA-Europe. The more input you can give us, the better!
- The questionnaire is available online²
- The deadline to submit the questionnaire is **Monday, April 26, 2010**
- current Strategic Plan (2008-2011) for your information and reference is available online³.

If you have questions about the questionnaire and the strategic planning process, please do not hesitate to contact me.

We look forward to receiving your input and to your participation to the process over the next few months!

Warm thanks in advance for your time and contribution!
Evelyne

¹ www.ilga-europe.org/media_library/ilga_europe/about_us/background_information_strategic_plan_2011_2014

² <https://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?formkey=dDFYTjRIMVhHbTRzcEF4MW9tMHIKb3c6MA>

³ www.ilga-europe.org/europe/about_us/organisational_documents/strategic_plans



Launch of 15 minutes video about ILGA-Europe: *“Different voices, one European movement”*

Source: media release by ILGA-Europe, 9 March 2010

ILGA-Europe is launching a 15 minutes video **“Different voices, one European movement”**⁴. The aim of this video is to provide a simple and clear explanation of what is ILGA-Europe, how it works and why there is a need for such an organisation.

This video was filmed during the 13th Annual Conference of ILGA-Europe in October 2009 which took place in Malta. The annual conference is a great setting for making such a video as this is the organisation’s largest annual event gathering together its members, allies and partners.

As ILGA-Europe works for equality and human rights for LGBTI people at European level, in this video we explain in an accessible way our work with the various European organisations. We also explain the methods we use in our work.

The video highlights the importance of the membership base to ILGA-Europe. ILGA-Europe brings together very diverse member organisations from across Europe and they play an important role in determining the organisation’s strategies and priorities. This video also gives specific examples on how our members benefit from being part of ILGA-Europe and what ILGA-Europe can do for its members.

Additionally, this video is a simple way to visualise the state of play regarding equality and human rights for LGBTI people in Europe. It highlights the advances in Europe made so far as well as challenges ahead.

Juris Lavrikovs, ILGA-Europe’s Communications Manager and executive producer of this film, said:

“We hope this short video will give a good overview to our current and potential members, supporters and friends what ILGA-Europe is and how it works. This video is a useful and simple ABC of ILGA-Europe as well as the current situation for LGBTI people in Europe.

We hope this video will become a useful educational tool for our members and supporters about the rights of LGBTI people in Europe. We also hope that it will contribute towards even greater, stronger and more diverse European movement.

Additionally, we would like to express our gratitude to Inka Stafrace, a Maltese-Australian film maker, for shooting and editing the video and bringing this project together.”

⁴ www.ilga-europe.org/europe/about_us/video_about_ilga_europe



Advocacy Planning in Almaty

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

In January 2010 the Republic of Kazakhstan took over the Chairmanship of the OSCE. Kazakh LGBT organization Amulet (<http://www.amuletlgbt.kz/>) has seized the opportunity that this offers and currently are investing much time and effort into developing their advocacy capacities and strategies.

From 10th to 12th March in Almaty we delivered an advocacy planning session for Amulet. The output was a three year advocacy plan covering three advocacy objectives. The session was attended by 9 staff and volunteers of Amulet.

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. Two additional sessions were done on principles of effective communication and effective documentation of human rights violations.

Amulet identified the need to work both on legislative level (ensuring that non discrimination principles are embedded in Kazakh legal system and that effective mechanisms for redress exist for victims of discrimination and hate crimes) and also on improving understanding of sexual orientation and gender identity among the general public in addition to within state structures. .

Amulet has been in existence for less than 2 years, however several key members have substantial previous experience working in other organizations on LGBT issues. ILGA-Europe has been working with Amulet for one year recently assisting their staff with responding to a media outcry around transgender issues.

Amulet's mission is to make available reliable information to contribute to the improvement of rights protection of LGBT people, to contribute to lowering the level of homophobia and discrimination towards LGBT people and to combat the spread of HIV/ AIDS through safe sex education and other means.

The training took place within the PreciS project, a five year project ending in December 2010 implemented with COC-Netherlands and GenderDocM and partners in seven countries. ILGA-Europe previously conducted such trainings in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine.

European Commission signs trade deal with countries jailing and killing gays and lesbians

Source: media release from the European Parliament's Intergroup on LGBT Rights, 22 March 2010

Negotiations came to a close last Friday over the revised Cotonou Agreement, which delineates political and trade relations between the European Union and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states.

Out of 79 ACP states, 49 criminalise homosexuality with up to 14 years in jail, and up to 5 punish lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people with death.

European Commissioner Andris Piebalgs previously intended to include non-discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation in the new terms (as demanded by the European Parliament), but finally agreed to conclude a deal with ACP states that does not mention the human rights of LGBT people, despite blatant increases in state-supported violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the ACP region.

Michael Cashman MEP, Co-president of the European Parliament's Intergroup on LGBT Rights, reacted: "This is unacceptable for the European Parliament. The Commission backed down in the face of governments that increasingly discriminate, imprison, torture and kill people because of their sexual orientation. It is a dangerous signal that there is a hierarchy of rights: some will be defended, but others will not. This matter will not be left to rest here."

Ulrike Lunacek MEP, Co-president of the Intergroup on LGBT Rights, concurred: "I would have expected Commissioner Piebalgs not to give in to pressure from ACP governments. His abdication is not only against European values, it also is harmful to LGBT people in ACP countries who are confronted with the notion of homosexuality being 'un-African'—a notion proven wrong by historians and sociologists. The European Parliament will confront the Commission with this decision."

The revised agreement has been tentatively agreed upon, with the official signature planned for June 2010 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

Developments at Council of Europe

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

Parliamentary Assembly resolution on sexual orientation and gender identity

Following postponement of the debate in the January session of the Assembly, the resolution was discussed again in Committee in March. Debate was intense, but hostile amendments were not adopted. The final debate (which can be followed live on the PACE website) will take place in the Assembly on the afternoon of Wednesday 28 April. Strong opposition is expected, and every effort will be needed to ensure our supporters are present.

The agenda for the April Session of the Assembly is accessible at:

<http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/WorkingDocs/doc10/edoc12183.htm>

The latest version of the resolution, and the accompanying report, are accessible here:

http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/DocListingDetails_E.asp?DocID=12998

Violence against Women Convention

The Council of Europe is preparing a Convention on Violence against Women. ILGA-Europe now has Observer Status at the drafting committee, after opposition by the Russian Federation to our participation was overruled at a meeting of the Committee of Ministers. We have proposed detailed amendments to the current draft designed to ensure specific recognition of violence against lesbian, bisexual and transgender women. The European Women's Lobby is proposing similar amendments.

For the current text of the draft convention, and for more information on the Convention drafting process, visit:

http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/violence/default_EN.asp

European Social Charter

In response to a shadow report by the Malta Gay Rights Movement and ILGA-Europe on access to health problems for transgender persons in Malta, the European Committee on Social Rights has asked the Maltese authorities "to describe the situation as regards access to health care for all people in marginal situations, particularly transgender people". The Committee pointed out that, according to the MGRM/ILGA-Europe report,

"the Maltese authorities do not offer the possibility of hormone therapy or sex change surgery, some health professionals know nothing about the specific health issues faced by transgender persons thus jeopardising the quality of the care provided in this sphere and discrimination has been experienced by transgender people when attempting to access routine health care."

This is the first occasion that transgender issues have been raised successfully under the Social Charter. The Committee's full conclusions on Malta can be found at:

http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/Conclusions/State/Malta2009_en.pdf

New legal instrument on the rights and legal status of children and parental responsibilities

A Council of Europe committee is currently working on an update to the *1975 European Convention on the Legal Status of Children born out of Wedlock*. ILGA-Europe has made detailed proposals for ensuring full recognition of the rights of children born in LGBT families in the new legal instrument. In a meeting in February the drafting committee took on board some, but by no means all, of ILGA-Europe's proposals.

ILGA-Europe's submission, and the updated draft of the legal instrument, can be found at:

www.coe.int/t/DGHL/STANDARDSETTING/FAMILY/ILGA-

[Europe%20Response%20to%20Professor%20Nigel%20Lowe's%20Report%20FINAL%20VERSION.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/DGHL/STANDARDSETTING/FAMILY/ILGA-Europe%20Response%20to%20Professor%20Nigel%20Lowe's%20Report%20FINAL%20VERSION.pdf)

and

www.coe.int/t/DGHL/STANDARDSETTING/FAMILY/CJ-

[FGT3%20_2010_%20RAP%201%2015%20mar%202010.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/DGHL/STANDARDSETTING/FAMILY/CJ-FGT3%20_2010_%20RAP%201%2015%20mar%202010.pdf)

Moldova commits to anti-discrimination law and guaranteeing safety of Pride participants

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

On 19th March, Beth Fernandez attended a debriefing for Brussels based NGOs at the Council of EU on the first ever EU-Moldova dialogue on Human Rights. There will be one dialogue per year alternating between Chisinau and Brussels.

The dialogues serve as a forum to discuss individual cases of human rights violations as well as ongoing issues with third countries and the EU has shown increasing commitment to raise LGBT issues within them.

The actual dialogue took place over three days in March in Chisinau and was conducted by the Spanish Presidency, the Former Personal Representative of the SG/HR on Human Rights in the area of CFSP and Brussels and Chisinau based staff of the European Commission.

On the Moldovan side, the presence of high ranking staff from key ministries indicated that the Government treated the dialogue as more than a mere diplomatic exercise. A highly unusual element was that a member of civil society (Eurasia Foundation) was present at the meeting and actively contributed to the discussion.

Prior to the Dialogue taking place, Moldovan LGBT organization GenderDoc-M and ILGA-Europe agreed that the priority issues were the draft anti discrimination law and the continuing problems around freedom of assembly. Each organization then communicated this to the EU delegation via the preparatory NGO meetings in Chisinau and Brussels in February.

Both issues were in fact raised and the Moldovan delegation agreed on the need for a comprehensive anti discrimination law inclusive of sexual orientation in accordance with EU standards and that they would make progress on this. Second the Moldovan Government gave a guarantee that the pride organized by GenderDoc-M in April/ May would be allowed to go ahead and that police would ensure the safety of participants.

All commitments made in the meeting including on freedom of assembly and anti discrimination law will be included in the Dialogue's 'Operational Conclusions' which will serve as the basis for monitoring progress in between dialogues. These will be shared with local NGOs and the EU delegation promised to share them with Brussels based NGOs.



First hearing by the European Court of Human Rights on same-sex marriage

by **ILGA-Europe**

On 25 February 2010, the European Court of Human Rights, has its first hearing on a case regarding same-sex marriage. The Court's hearing was on the admissibility and merits in the case of **Schalk and Kopf v. Austria** (application no. 30141/04).

Professor **Robert Wintemute** was granted a permission by the Court to make oral submission on behalf of the four third-party interveners: the FIDH (the Fédération Internationale des ligues des Droits de l'Homme, Paris), the ICJ (the International Commission of Jurists, Geneva), the AIRE Centre (Advice on Individual Rights in Europe, London), and **ILGA-Europe (the European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, Brussels)**.

A decision on admissibility, followed if appropriate by a judgment, will be delivered at a later date.

You can view webcast of the hearing at:

http://www.echr.coe.int/ECHR/EN/Header/Press/Multimedia/Webcasts+of+public+hearings/webcastEN_media?p_url=20100225-1/en/

Details of the case:

The applicants, Horst Michael Schalk and Johann Franz Kopf, are Austrian nationals who were born in 1962 and 1960 respectively and live in Vienna. They are a same-sex couple and live together.

In September 2002 the applicants asked the competent authorities to allow them to contract marriage. Their request was refused by the Vienna Municipal Office on the grounds that marriage could only be contracted between two persons of opposite sex. The applicants appealed before the Vienna Regional Governor and the Constitutional Court arguing that the notion of marriage had evolved over time thus having to be understood nowadays as a permanent union encompassing all aspects of life, and that the procreation and education of children were no longer a determinative factor in it. Their appeals were not successful. Both the Governor and the Constitutional Court, referring to Article 12 (right to marry) of the European Convention on Human Rights and also to Articles 8 (right to respect for private and family life) and 14 (prohibition of discrimination), held that to limit the notion of marriage to the traditional concept of marriage reserved to persons of a different sex was objectively justified.

Relying on Article 12, they complain of the authorities' refusal to allow them to contract marriage.

LGBT FAMILIES:



Relying further on Article 14 in conjunction with Article 8 they complain that they were discriminated against on account of their sexual orientation since they were denied the right to marry and have no other possibility to have their relationship recognised by law. Finally, under Article 1 of Protocol 1 (protection of property), they allege that they suffer financial disadvantages compared to married couples.

The application was lodged with the European Court of Human Rights on 5 August 2004.



European Court of Human Rights: Constitutional definition of marriage as a union of a man and a woman cannot justify discrimination against same-sex partners

Source: media release by ILGA-Europe, 3 March 2010

On 2 March 2010, the European Court of Human Rights unanimously ruled that Poland discriminated against a gay man on the grounds of his homosexual orientation by denying him a right to succeed a tenancy of a flat where he had lived with his deceased partner.

The facts in this case are as follows: Mr Piotr Kozak had been living with T.B., his male partner, since 1989 until 1998 when T.B. died. Tenancy agreement was on T.B.'s name and after T.B.'s death the application by Mr Kozak to conclude a lease agreement of their flat with him was rejected. While Polish legislation recognises some rights of cohabiting partners, the Polish authorities and the Polish courts repeatedly rejected the notion that such laws apply to same-sex partners.

Throughout the legal process in Poland, the Polish authorities and the Polish courts justified their refusal to recognise Mr Kozak's tenancy rights by referring to Article 18 of the Polish Constitution which defines marriage as 'a union of a man and a woman'. Consequently they insisted that the only form of cohabitation which is recognised by the law is exclusively between a man and a woman.

The European Court of Human Rights disagreed with such an approach and unanimously ruled that Poland violated Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination) and Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) by refusing to recognise cohabitation of same-sex partners. The Court said that "de facto marital cohabitation" must in Poland be understood to include persons in a same-sex relationship. While accepting the protection of the family founded on a union of a man and a woman as provided in the Article 18 of the Polish Constitution, the Court said that the state needs to strike a balance between such protection and the protections of the family and the Convention rights of sexual minorities. The Court pointed that the States had to take into considerations developments in society including the fact that there was not just one way of leading one's private life.

Evelyne Paradis, Executive Director of ILGA-Europe said:

LGBT FAMILIES:



"We welcome this decision of the European Court of Human Rights. This is the second decision affirming that if a State provides certain rights to cohabiting different sex partners, the same rights have to be made available equally to same-sex partners.

During the last few years some European countries introduced provisions in their Constitutions defining marriage as a union of a man and a woman with a view to prevent advance of the legal rights for same-sex partners.

In this case the European Court of Human Rights rejected a notion that a Constitutional definition of marriage as a union of a man and a woman can be used to justify the denial of certain family rights to cohabiting same-sex partners."

The judgement in the case of *Kozak. v Poland* is available at:

<http://cmiskp.echr.coe.int/tkp197/view.asp?item=12&portal=hbkm&action=html&highlight=&sessionid=47937399&skin=hudoc-en>



Hungarian Constitutional Court Affirms Constitutionality of Registered Partnership

by Tamás Dombos, Hatter Society for LGBT People

The Hungarian Constitutional Court has delivered its opinion on the Act on Registered Partnership that entered into force on July 1, 2009. The Court considered nine petitions among them a petition from the Christian Democratic Peoples Party (sister party of FIDESZ, the likely winner of the forthcoming general elections) and rejected them all, declaring that the Act is in line with constitutional requirements.

The legislative history of the Registered Partnership Act started three years ago when following the failed attempt of the liberal party to open up marriage for same-sex couples, the governing socialist-liberal coalition passed a bill on registered partnership (open for both same-sex and different-sex couples) in December 2007. The bill, however, never entered into force as in December 2008 the Constitutional Court declared it unconstitutional on the grounds that allowing different-sex couples to enter into a relationship very similar to marriage would duplicate the institution of marriage, and would therefore be incompatible with the special protection of marriage enshrined in the Constitution. Following the decision, the Parliament adopted a new, revised version of the Act in April 2009 that opened up the institution of registered partnership only to same-sex couples.

Soon after its adoption, conservative forces including the Christian Democratic Peoples Party, the Society for Christian Physicians in Hungary, the Pro Life Forum linked to the Catholic Church and representatives of Faith Church, a powerful Pentecostal church submitted nine petitions contending the unconstitutionality of the Act. The arguments were diverse: some argued that the new institution undermines the institution of marriage, others that excluding different-sex couples is discriminatory. There were legalistic arguments against the technique of codification (a general clause equating registered partnership with marriage for most purposes), but also religious arguments that homosexuality is disorderly and immoral. Several petitions claimed that by institutionalizing and promoting homosexuality the law harms the children. The Court rejected each of these claims one by one, reaffirming its previous decision that the right of same-sex couples to legal recognition and protection can be derived from the constitutional principle of human dignity and that the introduction of an institution similar to marriage for same-sex couples is a duty of the state imposed by the Constitution. The Court also added that the law will play a positive role in promoting the social acceptance of same-sex couples and help gays and lesbians to come out. As opposed to the generally positive tone of the decision, the Court also noted that not all differences between marriage and registered partnership are necessarily discriminatory, giving discretionary power to the legislator in deciding on the actual rights and duties that come with registered partnership.

According to the Hungarian legislation, registered partnership is a family law institution that is established by joint declaration in front of a registrar. The rules governing the establishment and dissolution of registered partnership are the same as for marriage, and registered partners are entitled to most of the rights available for married couples. Notable exceptions are the right to take the partners name, the right to adopt children and the right to participate in assisted reproduction. Conservative opposition parties expected to win elections next month strongly criticized the law for making registered partnership so similar to marriage. At this point it is unclear whether the new Constitutional Court decision will deter them from weakening the institution of registered partnership once in power.



UK: House of Lords votes by majority of 74 for civil partnerships in religious premises

Source: media release by Stonewall, 3 March 2010

Late last night Stonewall's latest amendment to the Equality Bill – to permit civil partnerships to be held in religious premises – was passed in the House of Lords by a majority of 74. The amendment, tabled by Lord Alli, was supported by peers across parties, including former Conservative Party Chairman Lord Fowler and Lord Harries, the former Bishop of Oxford.

'This further step towards equality is a real victory for religious reason over those Church of England and Roman Catholic bishops who've tried to bully other denominations in recent weeks,' said Stonewall Chief Executive Ben Summerskill. Quakers and Liberal Jews were among those denominations which supported the amendment.

During the debate Lord Alli, the only openly-gay peer, said: 'Religious freedom cannot begin and end with what one religion wants. It has to apply equally to the Quakers as it does to the Church of England and to the Liberal Jews as it does to the Catholic Church.' The Government opposed the amendment although it permitted its backbenchers a free vote after the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats had offered the same. The proposal was passed by 95 votes to 21 shortly before 11pm, after a lengthy debate.

Ben Summerskill said: 'We've argued throughout that this is an important matter of religious freedom. Ministers have known for some months that we intended to table this measure and we regret that the Government didn't stand up to the bullying it faced from some churches on this issue. We'll now work closely with ministers to ensure that we secure implementation of this further step towards equality. This vote is hugely important to those gay people of faith (and, as Lady Neuberger pointed out, to their Jewish mothers too!) who wish to celebrate their civil partnerships in their own place of worship.'

Funding opportunity to prevent and combat violence and to protect victims and groups at risk

Source: European Commission

National and regional LGBT organisations from 27 EU Member States, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein, the candidate countries and the Western Balkan states that work on hate crimes can apply.

The European Commission has since 2007 under the Daphne III programme supported the work against hate crimes and violence – you can read about the work programme for 2010 here:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/daphne3/doc/ag_call_2010_en.pdf

Facts about the call:

- The deadline for submitting proposals is **30 April 2010, 12:00 CET**.
- Projects require a minimum partnership of **2 organisations** from different EU member states and must be of duration of either **12 or 24 months**.
- Grants awarded under the call will range from € 75.000 to € 300.000 for 12-month projects and from € 150.000 to € 600.000 for 24-month projects, which may constitute a maximum of 80% of overall eligible project cost.
- The projects should start in the **first half of 2011**.

The objective of the funding is aiming to:

- assist and encourage NGOs and other organisations active in this field;
- develop and implement targeted awareness-raising actions;
- disseminate results obtained under Daphne;
- actions contributing to positive treatment of people at risk;
- set up and support multidisciplinary networks;
- expand of the knowledge base and exchange, identify and disseminate of information and good practice;
- design and test awareness-raising and educational materials;
- study phenomena related to violence and its impact;
- develop and implement support programmes for victims and people at risk and intervention programmes for perpetrators.

Historical verdict of Slovenian Court

by Tatjana Greif, ŠKUC-LL

The three young men, who attacked the lesbian bar *Café Open* in Ljubljana and a GLBT activist on 25 June 2009 were sentenced to one and a half year imprisonment. The decision of the Ljubljana District Court (on March 11th 2010) says that the three convicted men were instigating hatred, violence and intolerance on the ground of sexual orientation. The president of the court senate Mojca Zalar Kocjancic stressed that the defendants were breaking one of the fundamental human rights – the right to sexual orientation. The lawyers of the three convicted men already announced the complaint to the verdict.

This is the first case in the history of Slovenian juridical practice that a judgment has been passed with the sentence of imprisonment for breaking the law on the ground of sexual orientation.

UK: new homophobic incitement offence

Source: media release by Stonewall, 23 March 2010

From today, Tuesday 23 March, a much-needed new criminal offence outlaws threatening behaviour or materials intended to stir up hatred against people on grounds of their sexual orientation. Stonewall successfully lobbied for the new protections and warmly welcomes their introduction.

‘We’re delighted that incitement to hatred on grounds of sexual orientation can now finally be tackled effectively by the criminal law, in a similar way to hatred based on race or religion,’ said Stonewall Chief Executive Ben Summerskill. ‘Throughout our campaign for this legal change, Stonewall uncovered a range of extreme websites and material stirring up anti-gay hatred. This new legislation will send a strong positive signal, encouraging more lesbian, gay and bisexual people to report hate incidents. Gay people are entitled to live without fear just like everyone else.’

Stonewall sought a specific incitement offence having uncovered extreme homophobic materials that the law was previously powerless to address. The measures are included in the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008, building on existing legislation against racial and religious hatred.

‘The newly-extended criminal offence of incitement to hatred will go some way towards addressing the hatred and violence directed towards lesbians, gay men and bisexuals in Britain at a time when homophobic attacks are on the increase,’ said Ben Summerskill. ‘It sends a strong signal that such behaviour is unacceptable in a civilised society. Just like race, a person’s sexual orientation is an intrinsic characteristic for which no citizen should ever feel under threat of verbal or physical violence.’

Despite some alarmist claims about what the new laws will cover, they will categorically not impede genuine freedom of speech or the telling of jokes by comedians, as some have suggested. Instead, the important new offence will help prevent and tackle acts of serious hatred against individuals defined by reference to their sexual orientation, with a high threshold for prosecutions which must be approved by the Attorney General and heard before a jury.



Launch of the most extensive Pride guide in Europe

by Nanna Moe, ILGA-Europe's Communications Officer

In the next couple of months Pride events all over Europe will take place. ILGA-Europe is proud to launch a new tool on our website, where over 135 pride events are featured in a user-friendly calendar, so you can find information of pride events near you.

The right to freedom of assembly in Pride events is an important right for LGBT people as the community has a long tradition of organising pride marches and events. Luckily most Pride events are being held without threats or resistance. However ILGA-Europe is working to defend this right as there have been bans, threats and limitations on the right to freedom of assembly in several countries in Europe. ILGA-Europe has raised this issue with the European Parliament, the Committee of Region, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

It is no news that ILGA-Europe every year produces a list of Pride events in Europe – but thanks to amazing research by Frank Rönqvist (Finland) and development of a new calendar tool you can now find information for over 135 pride events such as:

- start and end date
- date of main event
- city and country
- website link

This tool is so far the most extensive guides to pride events in Europe, and is there an event that is not featured, let us know: nanna@ilga-europe.org

The calendar is available on our website:

www.ilga-europe.org/europe/guide/pride_events_in_europe/2010



Lithuanian Parliamentarians try to overturn permit for international LGBT Pride in Vilnius

Source: media release by the European Parliament's Intergroup on LGBT Rights, 16 March 2010

Only two weeks after the enactment of a controversial Law on the Protection of Minors in Lithuania, Members of the Parliament seek to ban an international lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pride event due to take place in Vilnius on the 8th May 2010.

Municipal authorities authorised the three-nation Baltic Pride event last month. But a petition led by Petras Gražulis, member of the Order and Justice party, calls on the national Prosecution Office to reconsider the permit in the light of a new law banning minors from accessing information about "non-traditional" forms of family. Gražulis claims to have gathered over 50 signatures from Members of Parliament.

The Lithuanian judiciary has yet to take account of the new law. Human rights organisations in Lithuania and the European Union have expressed serious concerns regarding the law, which could obstruct the freedom of expression and assembly for groups supporting the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Leonidas Donskis, Member of the European Parliament for Lithuania, commented: "Until now, the Order and Justice party was regarded as a marginal and anti-European political force. The petition led by Petras Gražulis says it all about how 'deeply embedded' European values of tolerance and respect for diversity are for him and his party. The time has come for more responsible and civilised political groups in Lithuania to react. Do they want to close ranks with Mr. Gražulis and his party? Do they wish to continue the struggle against the values founding the EU? The answer is theirs."

Michael Cashman MEP, Co-president of the European Parliament's Intergroup on LGBT Rights, further added: "I trust in the judiciary to throw out this shameful attack on fundamental rights. These people do not represent the decent citizens of Lithuania."

Following its September 2009 resolution expressing concern over the law, the European Parliament will keep monitoring the fundamental rights of sexual and gender minorities in Lithuania. The European Commission will also closely scrutinise the implications of the new law.



Registrations for international conference: “LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees: a case of double jeopardy?”

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

On 5, 6 and 7 July 2010, the University of Greenwich (London), together with a number of partners, will organise a conference on “LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees: a case of double jeopardy?” This event is organized in collaboration with ICAS (the Institute for the Converging Arts and Sciences), the Metropolitan Support Trust, the UK Lesbian & Gay Immigration Group, Michael Bell Associates Research & Consultancy, the Metro Centre and Stonewall Housing.

This conference will represent a major opportunity for stakeholders from the academic, public, voluntary and private sectors to discuss and debate issues around asylum seeking resulting from human rights violations based on sexuality and gender identity. The panels will explore the double dimension of the threats faced by LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees.

The persecution they are trying to escape is the first of these threats. A number of ILGA-Europe's members are working at national level with LGBTI persons seeking safety in Europe. The conference can be a good opportunity for them to exchange on the conditions of their action, and on their practices.

Asylum seekers are also facing very difficult situations when they arrive in Europe, including discrimination, refusal to grant them their social rights and benefits, problems about housing. Again, for those of our members who accompany refugees in their struggle for decent life conditions, the conference will be an important forum for exchanges and transfer of knowledge.

Academics, legal practitioners, activists, voluntary and private sector service organisations are invited to submit papers by 16 April 2010. Contributions to seminars, workshops, round-tables or presentations are welcome.

Activists and members willing to attend the conference can register by 14 May (early bird registration) or by 18 June 2010 (close of registration).

For more information, submissions and registrations, please visit the conference's website: www.lgbtiasr-doublejeopardy.org/Conference/ABOUT.html



Government issues new handbook to combat homophobia in Czech schools

Source: Czech Radio International, 2 March 2010, www.radio.cz/en/article/125547

The Czech government is distributing a new handbook to primary and secondary school teachers called “Homophobia in Schools” – aimed at raising awareness of homosexuality and the problem of bullying based on sexual orientation. The government council behind the handbook says it wants teachers to be better able to recognise homophobia – and to do something about it.

Children in schools everywhere call each names in the playground, and often that juvenile name-calling is of a sexual nature; boys and girls will often taunt each other with names such as “poof” or “homo” and so on. For most people it’s a normal part of adolescence, but some believe it should be clearly put into context by teachers, in an effort to create greater tolerance of homosexuality in later life. Lucie Otáhalová, head of the secretariat of the government council for human rights:

“Of course young people laugh at different things, not only at gays and lesbians – that’s part of the youth culture, but I think the role of schools and teachers should be to talk about this, to talk about homosexuality, to discuss it with students and show them that this is not correct. So that’s basically the purpose of the handbook – we want to give the handbook to these teachers, so they know what is homophobia, what types of students are the perpetrators, what types of students are the victims, and how to solve the problem.”

Lucie says the decision to publish the handbook was partly motivated by surveys showing that up to 75% of male pupils in the Czech Republic had negative attitudes towards gays and lesbians. But here at the Londýnská primary school in Prague, I discovered far more tolerant views:

“We sometimes say – you are gay – but we don’t really mean it in the real meaning. I don’t know any, but I think they are a little bit funny, but they are only people so I don’t know why to discriminate against them.”

“I tolerate this orientation, and the people, in the community, and I saw a lot of films about this theme. I like these people! They’re only people, and I don’t have a problem with them.”

The deputy head of the Londýnská school, Václav Nádvorník, strongly agrees that schools should accept homosexuality as a fact of life, and says the booklet is undoubtedly a good thing. However he believes it’ll just end up filed away with all the other publications schools like his receive from the government each year:

“There are gays and lesbians in the classroom, it’s true. In Moravia, Czech Republic, Zimbabwe, everywhere. They’re everywhere. But the way how children are educated about them and how they are respected is different, and it’s according to the personality of the teacher. Government can do nothing. As I said, it’s according to the teacher. If the teacher wants to accept it, it’s possible. If they don’t, it’s impossible.”

The Londýnská school is a progressive, cosmopolitan school in urban Prague, known for embracing diversity; attitudes to homosexuality elsewhere in the country, such as in the Catholic heartland of South Moravia, may be quite different. How children view homosexuality and how schools respond to homophobic behaviour depends largely on the attitudes of their teachers and parents, who – of course – simply reflect the values of their community.



Petition on Intersex to the International Olympic Committee

by Organisation Intersex International

Please support our petition to the IOC and if you agree with it, please sign it and share it with your colleagues and other associations interested in human rights.

<http://www.intersexualite.org/IOC-petition.html>

EWL Photo competition 'My World: Visions of 21st Century Feminism'

by European Women's Lobby

In the framework of its 20th anniversary celebrations, the European Women's Lobby is pleased to announce the launch of a photo competition looking to expose the visions of young women of the world they live in. The competition seeks images that make a creative and powerful statement on the theme of '21st Century Feminism'.

www.womenlobby.org/site/1abstract.asp?DocID=2692&v1ID=&RevID=&namePage=&pageParent=&DocID_sousmenu=

Call for nominees for the Livia Price 2010

by Livia Foundation

The Livia Foundation is hosting an award evening in June 2010, where we honour three groups or individuals, who have been able to handle conflicts in new ways. People, who have met major crises with awareness, creativity, wisdom and courage. People, who can inspire and give hope to others.

We are looking for pricewinners - individuals or initiatives - who take action in the conflicts that occur in society and who have been able to create constructive communication between the striving parts; maybe preventing a conflict from escalating into violence or deflating an already violent conflict and instead create dialogue and possibilities for negotiations. Or initiatives, that support a reconciliation process, so peace, healing and coexistence becomes possible. http://liviafonden.dk/site/images/call_for_nominees_2010.pdf