

No. 150  
January 2008

# EURO-LETTER

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

ILGA  
EUROPE 

**Euro-Letter is published by ILGA-Europe - the European Region of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA)**

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all previous Euro-Letters in English as well as the German and Portuguese translations from No.76, January 2000 and Greek translation from No 127, January 2006 are available in pdf format on our website:

**[www.ilga-europe.org/europe/publications/euro\\_letter](http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/publications/euro_letter)**.

**ILGA-Europe is grateful to**

- **the Lesbian and Gay Liberation Front** for the German translations of the Euro-Letter which are also available on their website: **[www.lglf.de](http://www.lglf.de)**;
- **Miguel Freitas** – for the Portuguese translations;
- **Pantelis Ravidas and Danae Panagiotopoulou** – for the Greek translations.

Euro-letter is published with support from the European Community – The European Union against Discrimination. The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.

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# ILGA-EUROPE:

## Conference on LGBT families in Europe

*by Christine Loudes, ILGA-Europe Policy Director*

ILGA-Europe in partnership with Legebitra are organising a conference on the topic of LGBT families in Europe. This conference is a contribution to the EU Presidency currently held by Slovenia. This conference will bring together decision makers, experts and activists in the field of LGBT families. We are inviting speakers from the Council of Europe, the European Union institutions and national governments for the conference to have an impact at European and national levels. It will be an opportunity to start and contribute to a dialogue between institutions and civil society on the topic of recognition and inclusion of LGBT families.

Further information and application forms are available on our website: [www.ilga-europe.org](http://www.ilga-europe.org)

## Have your say in developing the next EU Social Agenda

*by Evelyne Paradis, ILGA-Europe Senior Policy Officer*

The European Commission is currently holding a public consultation on the priorities for the next Social Agenda. The Commission is looking for ideas and input from the public on issues such as social justice, equal opportunities, better jobs, pensions, etc. This consultation will lead to the elaboration of the EU Social Agenda for the next few years.

This is an opportunity to name a few issues such as hate crime, diversity of family, discrimination in different areas of life. While some of the questions are multiple choice, there are also open-ended questions which give room to make comments and raise issues.

The European Commission's consultation is open until **15 February 2008** and is available in English at [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/emplweb/news/news\\_en.cfm?id=324](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/news/news_en.cfm?id=324)

## Winners of the EU Journalists Awards 2007 announced

*by Juris Lavrikovs, ILGA-Europe Communications Manager*

The 'For Diversity, against Discrimination' Journalists Award was first launched in 2004 and since then the number of entries has grown considerably each year. In 2007, a record 765 articles were submitted from all corners of the European Union.

In each of the 27 EU member states, a jury consisting of media professionals and anti-discrimination experts chose one national winner. These winners were then put forward to an EU level jury who had the difficult task of selecting three overall winners. Patricia Prendiville, Executive Director of ILGA-Europe, was on this year's EU jury. Among the national winners three articles specifically cover the issues of discrimination against LGBT and people living with HIV – Czech Republic, Slovenia and Sweden.

To mark the 2007 European Year of equal Opportunities for All, a special category was included for articles that dealt with activities taking place under the banner of the Equality Year as well as for articles that highlighted the issue of multiple discrimination, where people are being treated unfairly because for example they are older and female or gay and from an ethnic minority background. 16 of the national juries put forward article under this category and four articles cover LGBT aspects (Bulgaria, Denmark, Lithuania and Portugal).

Further information about the winners and their articles:

<http://journalistaward.stop-discrimination.info/1984.0.html>

# AGE OF CONSENT:

## **Gibraltar: GGR takes discrimination violations to Council of Europe Ministers**

*by Felix Alvarez, GGR*

“Caruana’s asphyxiating ‘doctrinally correct’ personal crusade is harming Gib in the UK, in Europe and within the GSD” says the group.

Equality Rights Group GGR has taken the issues of Gibraltar’s unequal age of consent and discriminatory sexual offences legislation to the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe. This is the highest possible level of the European body responsible for overseeing Human Rights.

In his comments, Chairman Felix Alvarez explained that the question which has been tabled directs itself to the United Kingdom’s responsibility regarding the Gibraltar Government’s failure to respect human rights standards not only in regard of unequal age of consent but across criminal offences such as 'buggery' and 'gross indecency; which exclusively criminalise gay men.

“The question has been tabled by Lib-Dem MP Mike Hancock, and places British Prime Minister Gordon Brown under additional pressure to ensure the Gibraltar government complies with international law requirements. It is now seven and a half years since the European Court ruled that age of consent inequality is in violation of the Convention. Compliance is normally required within a maximum 3 to 4 years.

“This regrettable situation,” he adds, “flies in the face of the Chief Minister’s new year claim that he will ensure ‘every’ citizen’s human rights. The facts tell a very different story and certainly the tabling of this issue at such a high level would not have been possible if the Chief Minister’s words had a grain of truth in them. There would simply be no basis for it. This is evidently one more “New Year Massage” that Gibraltar has once again been subjected to by Mr Caruana. And it is regrettable because the Chief Minister’s asphyxiating personal crusade against diversity and tolerance across this whole community is harming Gibraltar in the UK, in Europe and within his own party, the GSD.

“The historically kind and tolerant traditions of Gibraltar and Gibraltarians must be safeguarded against Mr Caruana’s frustrated impositions of failed puritanical ideologies masquerading as “traditional family values”, Mr Alvarez added.

# AGE OF CONSENT:

“We must all be wary of politicians who manipulate sentiment in this manner so as to bolster their failing electoral support. Family is valued by all human beings, but cheap populism has historically exploited the ‘family values’ argument to justify repressive policies on issues as diverse as interracial marriage, slavery and women’s rights and have been at the root of much incitement to hatred in the past. GGR will continue independently to resist all such pressures, while continuing to work to ensure that the real and legally recognised human rights of every citizen are truly respected and upheld despite every possible political and technical obstacle being placed by the Chief Minister. Under the rule of law, that work, as indeed that of Justice in general, can only be trusted to independent democratic institutions and human rights organisations and not to the Chief Minister.”

# SAME-SEX FAMILIES:

## European Court of Human Rights says lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals are eligible to adopt children

*ILGA-Europe media release, 22 January 2008*

Today the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights delivered its judgement in a case of E.B. v France and said that exclusion of individuals from the application process for adoption of children simply because of their sexual orientation is discriminatory and is in breach of the European Convention of Human Rights.

Ms. E.B. is a lesbian nursery school teacher who has been living with another woman since 1990. She applied for approval as a possible adoptive parent in February 1998, but her application was rejected, essentially because of her sexual orientation. In June 2002, the highest administrative court in France upheld the rejection of her application.

ILGA-Europe, FIDH (Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme), APGL (Association des Parents et futurs Parents Gays et Lesbiens) and the BAAF (British Association for Adoption and Fostering) were granted permission to take part in the proceedings as third parties.

In 2002 in the very similar case of Fretté v France, the European Court of Human Rights ruled by 4 votes to 3 that the exclusion of a gay man from the application process for adoption of children, because of his sexual orientation, did not violate Convention (but only 1 judge in the majority considered the exclusion justifiable; the other 3 rejected the case on technical grounds).

Patricia Prendiville, Executive Director of ILGA-Europe, said:

“We welcome today’s judgement of the European Court of Human Rights. This is a significant change in the Court’s approach towards and interpretation of the rights of LGBT people under the European Convention on Human Rights. Today the Court firmly established a principle that administrative officials cannot discriminate against an individual on the basis of her/his sexual orientation in the process of applying to adopt a child. This builds on the Court’s judgments in Smith & Grady v United Kingdom (1999), that LGBT people must be allowed to serve in the armed forces, and Mouta v Portugal (1999), that the sexual orientation of a parent is irrelevant when determining who should have custody of a child.

# SAME-SEX FAMILIES:

Until today France permitted administrative officials to exclude openly lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals from applying to adopt children. The European Court of Human Rights has decided that such a practice is discriminatory and violates the European Convention on Human Rights.

No one has an automatic right to adopt a child. But what the European Court of Human Rights said today is that European countries can no longer justify exclusion of lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals from applying for a child adoption. The Court has established the principle that ILGA-Europe has long fought for— each individual should be treated equally on the basis of their individual merits as a potential parent when applying to adopt a child. The sexual orientation of the applicant is irrelevant and cannot be used to exclude them from the possibility of adopting a child. It is in the best interest of children in Europe and outside Europe that no potential adoptive parent be excluded from consideration for an irrelevant and discriminatory reason."

Written comments of ILGA-Europe, FIDH, APGL and BAAF in the case of E.B. v France is available at ILGA-Europe website:

[http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/litigation\\_in\\_the\\_european\\_courts/european\\_court\\_of\\_human\\_rights\\_council\\_of\\_europe\\_strasbourg\\_france/e\\_b\\_v\\_france\\_written\\_comments\\_of\\_fidh\\_ilga\\_europe\\_baaf\\_and\\_apgl\\_3\\_june\\_2005\\_adoption\\_by\\_lesbian\\_woman\\_as\\_an\\_individual](http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/litigation_in_the_european_courts/european_court_of_human_rights_council_of_europe_strasbourg_france/e_b_v_france_written_comments_of_fidh_ilga_europe_baaf_and_apgl_3_june_2005_adoption_by_lesbian_woman_as_an_individual)

Full text of the judgement is available on the website of the European Court of Human Rights:

<http://cmiskp.echr.coe.int/tkp197/view.asp?action=html&documentId=827961&portal=hbkm&source=externalbydocnumber&table=F69A27FD8FB86142BF01C1166DEA398649>

# FUNDING OPPORTUNITY:

## **Astraea: Seeking applications from LGBTI groups outside the US- February 1st deadline!**

*by Astraea Foundation, 23 January 2008*

The Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice seeks applications for the next cycle of our International Fund for Sexual Minorities (**application due date is Friday, February 1st**).

We welcome (and encourage) applications via email (to be sent to [grants@astraeafoundation.org](mailto:grants@astraeafoundation.org)) from organisations all over the Global South (except Australia and New Zealand) and Global East (that means groups in Africa, the Middle East, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States!!!).

Further details on website: [www.astraeafoundation.org](http://www.astraeafoundation.org)

## **EIDHR - Support for Human Rights Defenders**

*by ILGA-Europe*

The general objectives of the new instrument are to contribute to the development and consolidation of democracy and the rule of law and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, consistent with the European Union's foreign policy as a whole.

Further details on ILGA-Europe website: [http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/funding\\_capacity\\_building/funding\\_opportunities/funding\\_opportunity\\_call\\_for\\_proposals\\_eidhr\\_support\\_for\\_human\\_rights\\_defenders](http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/funding_capacity_building/funding_opportunities/funding_opportunity_call_for_proposals_eidhr_support_for_human_rights_defenders)

# NOTICE BOARD:

## **ILGA seeks to hire a Finance, Administration and Organisational Support Officer**

*by ILGA, 20 January 2008*

ILGA, International Lesbian and Gay Association, is inviting applications for the position of Finance, Administration and Organisational Support Officer.

This full time position is based in the ILGA secretariat, Brussels, Belgium. The position is permanent but dependent on sufficient funding. The secretariat includes three other staff and it provides coordination and support to the ILGA network.

The Job description and supplementary information can be found on ILGA's website: [www.ilga.org](http://www.ilga.org)

Interested persons are required to submit their application in the form of an up-to-date **Curriculum Vitae as well as a letter explaining the applicant's motivation** in applying for this position and in working for an organization such as ILGA. Applications should be sent to: Patricia Curzi, [patriciacurzi@ilga.org](mailto:patriciacurzi@ilga.org)

**Deadline for applications is: February 29, 2008.**

The starting date will be as soon as possible.

Only short listed candidates will be contacted regarding their application.

# NOTICE BOARD:

## **LGBT and Human Rights International Training Programme**

*by Sören Juvas, RFSL, 11 January 2008*

Duration November 10-28, 2008, Stockholm Sweden, and June 1-5, 2009, Asia/Eastern Europe region.

Closing date for application: April 30th 2008

On behalf of Sida, I have the honour to invite candidates from the following countries to apply to this programme: Bangladesh, Georgia, Kirgizstan, India, Moldova, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Ukraine.

The training is administered by RFSU, The Swedish Association for Sexuality Education in partnership with RFSL, The Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights and will be conducted in English.

Sida will be covering the cost for participants concerning the participation fee, meals, accommodation and international travel. Personal expenses are not included.

For more information please go to: [www.rfsl.se](http://www.rfsl.se) or contact: [karin.lenke@rfsu.se](mailto:karin.lenke@rfsu.se)

# NOTICE BOARD:

## **Useful resource: Sexual Orientation and gender Identity: Jurisprudential, Legislative and Doctrinal References from the Council of Europe and the European Union**

*by International Commission of Jurists*

This document is a compilation of European jurisprudence, legislation and doctrine referring to sexual orientation and gender identity. It addresses references from both the Council of Europe and the European Union systems.

The objective of this document is to compile relevant and authoritative references in order to frame informed debate on the human rights concerns of sexual orientation and gender identity in Europe. The document is also meant to be a resource for human rights defenders working on these issues.

Available at: [http://www.icj.org/IMG/European\\_Compilation-web.pdf](http://www.icj.org/IMG/European_Compilation-web.pdf)

# NOTICE BOARD:

## Job opportunity with Human Rights Watch: Researcher on LGBT Rights

*by Human Rights Watch*

HRW's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender ("LGBT") Rights Program is seeking a Researcher. The Researcher will focus on human rights abuses related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression worldwide. The Researcher will work under the supervision of the Director of the LGBT Rights Program, who will provide guidance on the choice of research and advocacy projects. The Researcher will also coordinate research and advocacy plans with the HRW thematic and regional divisions. S/he will be responsible for ongoing research and advocacy efforts, play an important role in developing strategies for dealing with human rights issues related to sexuality and sexual rights, and contribute to policy development in this area. A particular though not exclusive focus of the position may be researching gender-based abuses, including against lesbian and bisexual women and abuses related to gender identity, and experience in this realm is highly desirable. S/he will carry out fact-finding missions to target countries; write and publicize reports on findings; develop advocacy strategies; present human rights concerns to governments, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, and the media; and write news releases, articles, op-eds, and position papers. S/he will help create and maintain partnerships with NGOs working on sexual rights and will follow media and other reports on human rights abuses based on sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. S/he may also be responsible for editing, speaking, and representing the LGBT Program in conferences and other meetings, along with related tasks. The Researcher will be based preferably in HRW's New York headquarters, although other locations may be considered.

**Please apply immediately (no calls or email inquiries, please)** by emailing together a letter of interest, resume, names or letters of reference, and a brief writing sample (unedited by others) **no later than February 25, 2008** to [lgbt@hrw.org](mailto:lgbt@hrw.org). Please use "LGBT Researcher Application" as the subject of your email. Only complete applications will be reviewed.