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- providing analysis and policy advice on PROGRESS policy areas;
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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

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ILGA-Europe welcomes EU Commission's proposal for a single anti-discrimination directive, but highlights a number of concerns

Source: ILGA-Europe's media release, 2 June 2008

On 2 June 2008 Vladimír Špidla, the EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, announced the Commission's proposal for a single EU anti-discrimination directive which provides for protection from discrimination on grounds of age, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief in areas other than employment. This new directive would ensure equal treatment in the areas of social protection, including social security and health care, education and access to and supply of goods and services which are commercially available to the public, including housing.

ILGA-Europe has been campaigning for a single anti-discrimination directive and welcomes the Commission's proposal which, when adopted, will end the hierarchy of rights and protections in the EU. ILGA-Europe welcomes that fact that the scope of the proposed directive is identical to the scope of the EU directives protecting against discrimination on the grounds of race. Currently, discrimination on the ground of race enjoys the highest protection in EU legislation compared to other grounds of discrimination, such as gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief. ILGA-Europe is particularly pleased to see that the proposed directive covers such areas as education. We also welcome the proposal to introduce Equality Bodies in all EU member states which would have a mandate to work on all grounds of discrimination.

At the same time, ILGA-Europe is concerned about various provisions of the proposed directive which might undermine application of the principles of equality and non-discrimination to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in the European Union. In particular, we are concerned with the fact that the proposed directive leaves out protection against differential treatment on the basis of marital/family status and in the area of reproductive rights. Introducing an exception to the principles of equal treatment and non-discrimination on the grounds of marital/family status will result in discrimination for many LGBT families and their children across the EU in accessing social protection, goods and services. Discrimination and consequent disadvantages experienced by LGBT families and their children were particularly highlighted as a serious cause for concern in a report published by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency on 30 June 2008.

ILGA-EUROPE:

The other area of concern is that gender will become the ground that is the least protected from discrimination in EU legislation. Currently, discrimination on the ground of gender is prohibited in such areas as employment and access to goods and services, but not in areas like education. ILGA-Europe hopes that the Commission will propose and commit to a timeline to address the remaining inequality of rights and protections in the nearest future.

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

"We warmly welcome the Commission's proposal. We also hope that the EU member states will follow the Commission and deliver to people in the EU what they deserve and are entitled to – respect, dignity and equality. By leveling up the rights and protections from discrimination, the EU will close an important gap in its equality and non-discrimination legislation. It will prove that these principles are not just empty words of political correctness inserted into the Treaties, but mean that the EU is serious when it comes to any type of discrimination. We express our concerns and would like to invite all EU institutions to address the remaining flaws to ensure that equality and non-discrimination principles contained in the EU Treaties are translated into meaningful and effective mechanisms for all people in the EU."

Further information about the Commission's proposal is available at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=373&furtherNews=yes>

ILGA-Europe's campaign on a single EU anti-discrimination directive on our website: http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/campaigns_projects/campaign_for_a_new_european_anti_discrimination_legislation

ILGA-EUROPE:

Getting better: Documentation, Monitoring & Advocacy

by Maxim Anmeghichean, ILGA-Europe's Programmes Director

A three-day advanced training on documenting human rights violations and evidence-based advocacy was organised by ILGA-Europe in Brussels. There were 13 activists from 9 European countries - failed, current and potential grantees of ILGA-Europe's Human Rights Violations Documentation Fund. The aim was to enhance understanding of monitoring and documentation process, improve report writing skills, develop advocacy strategies based on evidence collected and improve the quality of applications to the Fund, as well as the quality of reports on violations, produced by the grantees.

The first two days were devoted to documentation and advocacy, and conducted by trainers Judith Dueck (Canada, HURIDOCs) and Serghei Ostaf (Moldova, CReDO). During the third day the participants had an opportunity to rate each other's projects, as if they were members of the advisory board, which decides on applications, received by the Fund. The afternoon of day three was filled with the individual feedback sessions by the trainers and ILGA-Europe members of staff on applications to the Fund and reports already produced with the Fund's support.

This is the fourth training covering the themes of documentation and advocacy, organised by ILGA-Europe over the last four years, and is part of a series of capacity building events to improve activists' skills in this field.

For more information on ILGA-Europe's Human Rights Violations Documentation Fund or its capacity building work, please contact Programmes Director Maxim Anmeghichean at maxim@ilga-europe.org

Training images are available on our website: www.ilga-europe.org/europe/photo_galleries/training_on_documenting_human_rights_violations_brussels_9_1_1_july_2008

LGBT Activists meet Commission during Progress Report Consultation on Accession Countries

by Maxim Anmeghichean, ILGA-Europe's Programmes Director

ILGA-Europe has organised participation of activists from Turkey, Croatia and Serbia in the consultation on progress reports regarding countries in the process of accession to the European Union. The consultation was hosted by the European Commission, and was an opportunity for civil society to express their views with regards to democracy, human rights and the rule of law in the Balkans and Turkey. The LGBT activists have presented the Commission with information regarding human rights violations on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, and recommendations for legislative and political changes necessary to create a positive environment for LGBT people. As non-discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation is part of the EU acquis, countries in the process of accession to the EU have to comply with this provision.

Apart from Commission consultation, the programme of the visit included dinner with MEP, Chairman of the European Parliament's Intergroup on LGBT Rights Mr Cashman, other MEPs, as well as meetings with country desk officers in the European Commission.

One of the Turkish activists later wrote to ILGA-Europe: "Progress reports are considered very important by the politicians, the media and the society in Turkey, the issues covered by the report are widely discussed in the country. So if LGBT issues are covered by 2008 progress report, as they were the year before, this means that these issues will be discussed more in Turkey. As a result, LGBT community and organisations will have the chance to express their views more to the politicians, the media and the society".

ILGA-EUROPE:

ILGA-Europe goes facebook!

by Juris Lavrikovs, ILGA-Europe's Communications Manager

ILGA-Europe makes sure to keep up to speed with new technologies and possibilities to raise the profile of the organisation, and inform and involve wider audiences about its work, campaigns and projects.

Facebook, a social network with over 123 million unique visitors in May 2008, is one of the largest and fastest growing social networks on internet.

ILGA-Europe's page on facebook is relatively new but we are planning its expansion to make our page more attractive, interesting and dynamic. We already provide general information about the organisation, and send regular updates about ILGA-Europe's activities, projects, publications and campaigns. Our facebook page also contains recent image and video galleries.

Facebook presence provides ILGA-Europe with new and different ways of staying in touch and updating our members and supporters. This also gives us a chance to increase the circle of people who know about the organisation and potentially recruit more members, supporters and friends. In no way our facebook page is a substitute to our website, it's just a new, contemporary and additional mean of our communications and of being closer to our existing and potential members and supporters.

If you are a facebook user, join our page, make ILGA-Europe your friend, invite your friends to join and keep up to date in informal and friendly way!

If you are not a facebook user, you still can view ILGA-Europe's page. Our unique address is

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/ILGA-Europe/11494607341>

FRA: Wider powers and greater measures needed to tackle homophobia

Source: media release by Fundamental Rights Agency, 30 June 2008

Equal protection by EU anti-discrimination law remains an ideal not a fact for Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transsexuals (LGBT) living in many parts of the European Union (EU). Greater legislative protection and wider support within the EU is required. Legal analysis covering the EU 27 released today by the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) identifies differences in treatment and protection by the law and a lack of full and equal enjoyment of rights in areas of EU competence, particularly with regard to same sex partnerships. As the European Union begins its debate on non-discrimination with the publication of a new Communication by the European Commission on 2 July, the FRA believes that the equal right to equal treatment should underpin the legislative direction.

"Equal treatment is a fundamental right that all members of our society should enjoy", said FRA's Director Morten Kjaerum, "the fact that Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transsexuals are not treated equally in some aspects of EU legislation, particularly concerning same sex couples should be a cause of concern for us all. More comprehensive legal protection, as well as wider powers and resources for equality bodies are required, and I urge that the new measures on non-discrimination discussed by the EU will ensure this".

The report finds that in 18 out of 27 EU Member States, any artificial "hierarchy" of those facing discrimination has been disregarded and members of the LGBT community enjoy legal protection and rights in the areas of employment, access to public goods and services, housing and social benefits. The report also concludes that rights and advantages of married couples should be extended to same-sex partnerships. This is equally relevant for rights and benefits for spouses and partners related to free movement and family reunification.

The principle of equal treatment, a fundamental EU value, is guaranteed by the Charter of Fundamental Rights: Article 21 prohibits any discrimination based on grounds such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation. The new measures on non-discrimination discussed by the EU should therefore, commensurate to the EU Fundamental Rights Charter, extend legal protection to all the areas covered by the EU's racial equality legislation and in all Member States of the Union.

EUROPE:

Homophobic hate speech and hate crime represent obstacles to the possibility for individuals to exercise their free movement and other rights in a non-discriminatory manner. This can be combated using EU wide criminal legislation. The report also documents incidents of banning LGBT demonstrations, such as “pride parades”. In addition, the continuing misunderstandings concerning the gathering and compilation of statistical data needs to be addressed to ensure that efforts to combat discrimination can make full use of the tools available and rely on solid and comprehensive statistics.

Transgender issues, often ignored or forgotten, are also treated in this report, which calls for a clarification of their treatment under anti-discrimination legislation.

The report highlights examples of good practice to overcome underreporting of LGBT discrimination, to promote inclusion and to protect transgendered persons.

FRA’s legal analysis is the first of two reports related to homophobia and discrimination experienced by members of the LGBT community. The second report detailing the social aspects will be released later in the autumn.

A summary of FRA’s report entitled **“Homophobia and Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation in the EU Member States Part I – Legal Analysis”** is available at <http://fra.europa.eu>

EUROPE:

Council of Europe takes major initiatives to combat discrimination against LGBT people

Source: ILGA-Europe's media release, 8 July 2008

In a very important development for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities across Europe, representatives of the 47 Council of Europe member states have committed to stepping up the organisation's work to combat discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. Action is to be taken at three levels:

- The Committee of Ministers (which consists of member state Foreign Ministers) is to issue a declaration on combating discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, and the need to ensure respect for the human rights of LGBT people
- An intergovernmental expert committee is to examine measures to avoid discrimination against LGBT partners
- All committees involved in intergovernmental co-operation are to take account in their work of the need for member states to avoid discrimination against LGBT people and to make proposals for specific activities designed to strengthen their rights.

In deciding on these actions, the Council of Europe has strongly reaffirmed its commitment to the equal rights and dignity of LGBT people.

ILGA-Europe Executive Director, Patricia Prendiville commented: "This is a historic development. For the first time since the foundation of the Council of Europe nearly 60 years ago, its executive committee, the Foreign Ministers of the 47 member states, is to issue a formal declaration in support of LGBT rights, and to engage the whole organisation in combating discrimination against LGBT people."

ILGA-Europe's Council of Europe adviser, Nigel Warner added: "Much of the credit for this great step forward goes to LGBT human rights defenders in Central and Eastern Europe. Their courageous work in advocating for LGBT rights has revealed the appalling extent of homophobia and transphobia in many countries, and shocked the Council of Europe into taking action".

EUROPE:

Special Eurobarometer 296: Discrimination in the European Union: Perceptions, Experiences and Attitudes

by Michael Forrest, ILGA-Europe's Communications Officer

The latest Eurobarometer survey examining discrimination in the EU was published in July 2008. The survey was conducted between February and March 2008 and reveals that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is seen as the second most widespread form of discrimination in the EU (after ethnic origin). The three countries where it is seen as particularly widespread are Cyprus (where 73% of respondents answering that it was very widespread), Greece (73%) and Italy (72%). Conversely, several new EU Member States perceive discrimination on the grounds of sexual origin to be less commonplace: Bulgaria (20%), Czech Republic (27%) and Slovakia (30%). (Notably, fewer respondents in these countries reported that they have gay or lesbian friends.) In addition, the perception of the extent of discrimination on the grounds of sexuality has remained stable since 2006, but has declined over the past five years: in virtually all countries of the EU most people believe that sexual orientation discrimination is now less commonplace.

Interestingly, sexual orientation discrimination is much more likely to be reported as seen rather than actually experienced, with just 1% of EU citizens reporting that they have been discriminated against due to sexual orientation.

Most Europeans are comfortable with having a gay or lesbian neighbour, the average being 7.9 on a ten-point comfort scale: Swedes being most comfortable (9.5), followed by Dutch and Danes (9.3 each). This level of comfort is not shared by Bulgarians (5.3), Latvians (5.5) and Lithuanians (6.1).

Finally, most Europeans feel comfortable with having a gay or lesbian leader in their country: the EU average being 7.0 out of a possible 10. Significantly, over one-third of Europeans (36%) would feel totally comfortable with having a gay or lesbian leader, rating this at 10 out of 10.

Eurobarometer 296 Discrimination in the European Union: Perceptions, Experiences and Attitudes can be downloaded at:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fundamental_rights/pdf/pubst/stud/eurob08_en.pdf

EU anti-discrimination truck is aiming for Vilnius, again...

Source: www.delfi.lt, 21 July 2008, translated into English by Juris Lavrikovs

Representatives of the European Commission in Lithuania requested the permission of Vilnius municipality to display EU's anti-discrimination truck and organise tolerance promoting activities on the main square of the city. Lithuanian LGBT activists are ready to take part in these activities but this year they are not planning to display rainbow flags. The truck is travelling around Europe and is scheduled to come to Vilnius on 29 August. This issue was discussed between Kestudis Sadauskas, head of the Commission's representation in Lithuania and Juozas Imbrasas on 21 July 2008.

Organisers of the truck tour stress that the aim of the tour is to promote awareness about the ban of discrimination in employment in EU on the grounds of ethnicity, religion, race, gender and sexual orientation. K. Sadauskas explained that "the truck does not promote the rights of LGBT people only. We have no intention of singling out one group, as all of them are entitled to equal rights." He also said that the EU truck travelled around all EU country with the exception of Lithuania.

Vilnius municipality has not yet decided whether to allow the truck to the city. J. Imbrasas said: "While I am a mayor, there won't be any gay propaganda." He thinks that public appearance of LGBT people in the centre of Vilnius will lead to public disorders. He suggests the organisers of tolerance promoting activities to organise an event in enclosed space.

Vladimiras Slmonko, president of Lithuanian gay League, confirm that the organisation is planning to take part in the activities of the EU truck, but with lesser visibility compared with the last year's plans. He said that the organisation is planning to use the truck for distributing their publications and not displaying rainbow flag. "The time is still to come for those six colours to become part of the face of the city and its decoration. I don't see it happening yet" he said.

Last year the mayor of Vilnius banned the EU anti-discrimination truck from entering Vilnius because LGBT activists were planning to display a 30 meters long rainbow flag. This was so far the only case when the EU anti-discrimination truck was banned from any place in the EU.

LGBT FAMILIES:

Different Families, Same Right? LGBT families roving exhibition

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

ILGA-Europe is pleased to launch another product complementing its *Different Families, Same Right?* project launched earlier this year at the LGBT families conference in Ljubljana.

ILGA-Europe shall print on canvas the 12 images of the LGBT families poster series, and launch them as a roving exhibition. The intention is to reach the widest audience possible and assist the quest for legal equality at national level. The roving exhibition shall be launched at the forthcoming ILGA-Europe's Annual Conference in Vienna (Oct/Nov 2008) and subsequently co-hosted with the LGBT Intergroup at the European Parliament.

ILGA-Europe would like to see this exhibition travel extensively within Europe, and urges all interested organisations to get in touch to book a slot for the hosting of this exhibition in their respective country/city during 2008-2009. ILGA-Europe is ready to provide the translation of the texts of the posters into the national language/s, and prepare them in the form of printed exhibition plaques to accompany the exhibition. It can also send a reasonable number of copies of the family reports, posters and postcards (English only) for distribution during such events.

For further information contact Silvan Agius at silvan@ilga-europe.org

LGBT FAMILIES:

Ireland: GLEN Strongly Welcomes Proposed Legislation for Civil Partnership But Urges the Government to Include Protections for Same-Sex parents and their Children

Source: media release by GLEN, 24 June 2008

GLEN strongly welcomes the proposals in the Heads of Bill for civil partnership published today by the Government. For the first time, lesbian and gay relationships will be recognised, supported and protected by the State.

“This is a reform whose time has come” says Kieran Rose. “All political parties have played a role in getting us to this point and there is huge public support for change” continues Kieran Rose.

“Comprehensive civil partnership, as proposed in the Heads of Bill, is a major milestone towards equality. The goal of GLEN is access to full equality through civil marriage and this Bill is a fundamental step forward towards this goal. The provisions outlined today will resolve many immediate and pressing issues faced by lesbian and gay couples and will also provide a platform for further progress.” continued Kieran Rose..

“The proposals in the Heads of Bill however, do not provide for legal recognition of the many same-sex couples, particularly women, who are parenting children together, leaving these parents and their children outside the protection of the State” continues Kieran Rose. .

“This is of critical importance to parents and their children and GLEN urges the Government to bring forward proposals to address this legal gap” says Kieran Rose.

GLEN also strongly welcomes the proposals in the Heads of Bill for a Redress Scheme to offer certain protections to co-habiting couples who do not marry or avail of civil partnership and which will be provided to both opposite-sex and same-sex couples on an equal basis.

“We look forward to the early passage of the Bill” continues Kieran Rose.

LGBT FAMILIES:

Czech minister wants homosexuals to adopt their partner's kids

Source: http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/news/index_view.php?id=323710, 17 July 2008

Czech Minister for human rights and ethnic minorities Džamila Stehliková (Greens, SZ) would allow homosexuals to adopt children of their partners, she told reporters today. Czech experts are studying the influence of gay and lesbian parents on children. The studies should be completed in early 2009 and then Stehliková wants to present them to the public.

Similar studies carried out abroad have not proved any negative impact in connection with the sexual orientation of parents, Stehliková said. On the basis of the studies' results, the government working group for sexual minorities will prepare ground documentation for possible legislative changes.

Stehliková said homosexuals should have the right to adopt children of their same-sex partners that they have from their previous marriages. She added that during this election term, no proposal that homosexuals be allowed to adopt children in general be submitted. Stehliková, however, said it would be better for children to live with a same-sex couple than in institutional care.

The Czech Republic has been criticised over a too high number of children in institutional care in the long run. Some 20,000 children live in various institutions in the 10-million country.

LGBT FAMILIES:

Estonia debates same-sex partnerships

Source: www.delfi.ee, 3 July 2008, translated into English by Juris Lavrikovs

The Ministry of Justice of Estonia is preparing a draft law which would allow same-sex partners to register their cohabitation. Mr Lang, Minister of Justice, said to Estonian daily "Eesti Päevaleht" this is a follow up on the Ministry's promise to adopt such law in 2009.

At this stage the Ministry does not want to reveal details of the draft as a final decision has not yet been taken. There will be amendments required in such areas as inheritance, property rights and citizenship.

The same problems exist also with regard to heterosexual couples as a draft Family Law in Estonia regulates rights and responsibilities only of married partners and not of cohabiting couples.

Jaan Kroon, coordinator of Gay and Lesbian Information Centre in Tallinn, said they hope that not only same-sex but also opposite-sex couples will cooperate on this draft law. Same-sex couples do not demand church weddings or marriage rights, however they insist on a right to adopt their partner's biological child.

According to a poll conducted by "Eesti Päevaleht" among parliamentary fractions, most of them will support the cohabitation law for same-sex partners. However the parliamentarians are not ready to grant same-sex partner adoption rights.

TRANSGENDER:

Germany: Forced divorce of trans people declared unconstitutional

by Justus Eisfeld

On 23 July 2008, the German Constitutional Court declared the provision in the German Transsexual Law (Transsexuellengesetz TSG) which requires forced divorce of transsexuals unconstitutional. The TSG requires that transsexuals who legally want to change their gender marker on their birth certificates have to be unmarried (though a registered partnership was no hindrance). This part of the law has just been declared unconstitutional and may not be used until the German government proposes a new solution. The German government has a deadline of 1 August 2009 to come up with a new law. Earlier the Constitutional Court declared that a retrieval of a legal change of names in the case of a marriage after the name change was also unconstitutional.

This is a major victory for the trans community in Germany and abroad - as well as for the broader LGBT community. After Austria in 2006, Germany is the second country without same-sex marriage that abolishes the forced divorce rule for transsexuals.

Press release in German: <http://www.bundesverfassungsgericht.de/pressemitteilungen/bvg08-077.html>

HATE CRIME:

UK: One in five gay people victim of hate crime in last three years

Source: Stonewall' media release, 26 June 2008

Home Secretary Jacqui Smith on 26 June tasked the Ministerial Action Group on Violence to address homophobic hate crime in the light of disturbing new findings from major new research. The first statistically significant national survey of its kind, commissioned by Stonewall from YouGov, reveals the extent of abuse facing many of Britain's 3.6 million lesbian and gay people on a daily basis. One in five have been a victim of one or more homophobic hate crimes in the last three years. However three in four don't report such incidents to the police, many believing that no action will follow. The incidents ranged from harassment to serious physical and sexual assaults.

YouGov surveyed 1,721 gay and lesbian people across Britain between 29 February and 4 March. Asked about their experiences and fear of homophobic hate crime:

- Only one per cent of all victims report that the hate crime or incident resulted in a conviction.
- A third of victims did not report incidents to the police because they did not think the police would or could do anything about it.
- Two thirds of those who reported incidents to the police were not offered or referred to advice or support services.

The report's ten key recommendations include encouraging police to improve the recording of homophobic hate incidents and help lesbian and gay people to report them. The report also recommends tackling homophobic bullying in schools and the workplace in order to help reduce the likelihood of homophobic incidents on the streets.

This report is available on Stonewall's website:

http://www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/homophobic_hate_crime__final_report.pdf

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY, EXPRESSION AND ASSOCIATION

Photo exhibition “27 Pictures of pride”

by Juris Lavrikovs, ILGA-Europe’s Communications Manager

On 16 July 2008, Christofer Fjellner, a Member of the European Parliament (European People’s Party) hosted the opening of a photo exhibition entitled “27 Pictures of pride” within the premises of the European Parliament.

Mr Fjellner explained that with this exhibition he wanted to provide an answer to a question – who is it that really stands out from the crowd? He said these pictures from Gay Pride events throughout the EU highlight contrast between two different aspects of the festivals. On the one hand, what fantastic street parties the parades are, while on the other, the hatred and resistance that Pride parades continue to be met with from rock-throwing hooligans and narrow-minded politicians around Europe.

He asked further: “Who is queer? The people who want to gather for a fantastic party, or those that choose to resort to violence to prevent it from happening? Who is it that really stands out from the crowd?”

ILGA-Europe provided Mr Fjellner with a number of images and contacts of pride event organisers in various EU countries and delivered a speech at the opening highlighting the need for European and national framework and legislation addressing and recognising transphobic and homophobic incidents as hate crimes.

Mr Fjellner is interested in making this exhibition available also around the EU and we encourage our members and supporters to contact him directly if interested in hosting this exhibition their respective country: christofer.fjellner@europarl.europa.eu

Some pictures of the opening of this exhibition are available on our website: http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/photo_galleries/27_pictures_of_pride_photo_exhibition_15_18_july_2008

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY, EXPRESSION AND ASSOCIATION

Attacks & violence during Prides in Ljubljana, Sofia, Brno, and Budapest. Zagreb pride without serious incidents.

by Michael Forrest, ILGA-Europe's Communications Officer

The weekends around the end of June and beginning of July are traditionally time for Pride parades around Europe. Pride is a celebration of diversity, but regrettably, despite many peaceful and celebratory events, violence was not absent in some European cities this year.

In Slovenia the 8th Ljubljana Gay Pride took place on 21 June 2008. Following the official parade, several participants were subjected to verbal and even physical abuse.

The first Pride in Sofia faced opposition by various extremist organisations that organised a "Week of Intolerance". Lively public debates around the first Pride resulted in Sofia mayor's decision to change the route of the Pride March on 28 June 2008. ILGA-Europe sent a letter to Sofia mayor expressing concerns regarding activities aimed at propagating intolerance and asked the mayor to publicly condemn such activities and to sign ILGA-Europe's appeal already signed by 20 European mayors. More than 60 persons were arrested by police for trying to attack participants. The counter-demonstrators threw stones, bottles, and even Molotov cocktails at participants (who numbered around 150).

In Croatia, organisers of Zagreb Pride estimated the number of participants to be between 500 and 600. Zagreb Pride went off largely without incident, although police did have to intervene in two separate incidents.

The Czech Republic's first ever Gay Pride parade in Brno saw 20 people injured when they were attacked by right-wing extremists.

Meanwhile in Hungary, despite the threat of a ban, Budapest Pride went ahead on 5 July 2008. Neo-Nazis disrupted the parade, pelting marchers with stones and eggs and hurling fire bombs at police. Police were forced to use water cannons and tear gas to disperse aggressors. At least 45 protesters were detained and two police officers injured.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY, EXPRESSION AND ASSOCIATION

Despite bans on the event every year, the organisers of Moscow Pride have announced their plans for 2009

Source: Pink News, 22 July 2009, <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/news/articles/2005-8447.html>

Russia won the Eurovision Song Contest earlier this year for the first time, and it was announced yesterday that next year's final will be held on May 16th at Moscow's Olympiyskiy stadium.

"We will conduct the gay pride on the day of the Eurovision final," organiser Nicolas Alexeyev told the Interfax news agency. "As usual we will notify Moscow authorities about the conduct of the event."

Last week Pride activists said they would be holding an international conference dedicated to the International Day Against Homophobia on 17 May. They intend to invite the Mayors of Paris and Berlin, who are gay, and the Mayor of London, who is not.

"Russia must show that it is part of the civilised world, of the European family, that it is tolerant and that it is possible to conduct public actions of sexual minorities in Moscow," said Mr Alexeyev.

The Mayor of Moscow has called gay rights activists "Satanic" and banned Pride in 2006 and 2007.

This year Pride organisers applied for permission to hold five marches a day, every day of May. All were rejected by Moscow municipal authorities on the grounds they would "endanger public order and cause negative reaction of the majority of the population."

On June 1st a group of 30 gay activists managed to stage short protests in front of Moscow City Hall and a statue of Tchaikovsky yesterday without being arrested. There followed a farcical game of cat and mouse as police surrounded an apartment where four activists were eventually arrested after hours of siege. They were held overnight and charged with taking part in an unauthorised demonstration and failing to obey police orders. The short demonstrations were planned in order to take the authorities by surprise.

NOTICE BOARD:

Job opportunity with EAPN – Policy Officer

Source: EAPN

The European Anti-Poverty Network is looking for a Policy Officer. The purpose of job is to support, advise, and strengthen EAPN in its policy and advocacy work.

Candidates for this post are expected to have a minimum of **4 years relevant work experience**. Please note that CVs are not accepted. Job description and applications form are available at EAPN website:

<http://www.eapn.eu/content/view/413/29/lang,en/>

The closing date for receiving the application is **22 August 2008**.

Interviews will take place on **Tuesday 9 September**.

¹ Available at http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/publications/non_periodical/transgender_eurostudy_legal_survey_and_focus_on_the_transgender_experience_of_health_case_april_2008

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

NOTICE BOARD:

Call for papers: a special issue of the Journal of LGBT Health Research

by Dr Jeffrey V. Lazarus, WHO Regional Office for Europe

The Journal of LGBT Health Research, an interdisciplinary quarterly of community and clinical practice, provides an innovative forum for LGBT health issues and highlights the best of social-, psychobehavioral- and biologically-based public health research and health services access/utilization evaluation - Seth L. Welles, Editor in Chief.

Jeffrey V. Lazarus and Srđan Matic of the World Health Organization will be guest editing a special issue of the Journal of LGBT Health Research for publication in the autumn of 2009. The issue will focus on MSM and HIV epidemiology, literacy, access to prevention, treatment and care, and psychosocial factors associated with heightened HIV risk in the 53 countries of the WHO European Region, with a focus on eastern Europe and central Asia. In particular, we are interested in research papers, reviews and debate pieces that:

- report on excellence and innovation in practice or the provision of services developed through unusual policy routes;
- review access barriers such as criminalisation of homosexuality (official or de facto), the criminalisation of infection transmission, including travel restrictions for people living with HIV and other discriminatory legislation;
- review interventions that can reduce access barriers, such as those listed above;
- analyse focused policies and interventions targeting MSM who also belong to another vulnerable group, e.g. injecting drug users, migrants or sex workers;
- address aspects of prevention which have faced institutional resistance in some countries, such as condom provision and promotion;
- study HIV and opportunistic infections, in particular TB, or co-infections such as hepatitis B and C, in MSM populations;
- report on surveillance, estimations or epidemiological aspects of HIV/AIDS and MSM.

Articles should be under 5000 words and will need to be submitted to the journal by **15 December 2008**.

For further details on format etc please see www.haworthpress.com.

To discuss your planned contribution before submission please contact jl@euro.who.int.