

MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

ILGA-Europe welcomes condemnation of homophobia by European Parliament

On 25 April 2007, members of the European Parliament debated, and today adopted a new resolution on homophobia in Europe. The resolution highlights the general problem of homophobia at pan-European level and makes a number of specific references to Poland and a climate of state-sponsored homophobia in that country.

ILGA-Europe is very pleased that the European Parliament has repeatedly demonstrated its leading role in the observation of human rights in EU member states. This is the third resolution on homophobia adopted by the European Parliament in a relatively short time. ILGA-Europe is pleased that despite calls from some members, the European Parliament denied a motion not to debate this resolution and voted for it.

ILGA-Europe is also pleased to hear repeated the commitment to uphold EU anti-discrimination legislation from the European Commission. Following the debate at the parliament, Vladimir Špidla, the EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, made it clear that if adopted, the controversial proposal by the Polish minister of education would clearly contravene the EU anti-discrimination legislation.

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

“Some expressions during yesterday’s debate at the European Parliament are living proof of homophobia existing in Europe. We are very pleased that the Parliament rejected the motion not to discuss this issue and voted for the resolution.

Homophobia is, unfortunately, alive and well across Europe and the firm stance of the European Parliament is crucial for furthering the fight against discrimination and prejudice which LGBT people in Europe face on a daily basis. The European Parliament is the only elected institution in the EU and directly represents the EU citizens. Yesterday’s debate and its positive

outcome is an important signal – the majority of European citizens' representatives condemn homophobia.

We will continue working with all institutions towards strengthening and enhancing protections against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. We particularly look forward to working with the Fundamental Rights Agency which is currently conducting research on homophobia in Europe which we hope will become the basis for further actions by other EU institutions to combat homophobia.

Another development which we await and anticipate is the strategic initiative on extending protections against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in areas outside employment, which Commissioner Vidale also referred to yesterday in Parliament.”

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Notes for editors:

(1) ILGA-Europe is the European Region of the International Lesbian and Gay Association and works for equality and human rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Europe: www.ilga-europe.org

(2) Text of the resolution is available on our website: www.ilga-europe.org/europe/news/ilga_europe_welcomes_condemnation_of_homophobia_by_european_parliament

(3) You can view video recording of yesterday's debate at the European Parliament's website: www.europarl.europa.eu/eplive/vod/seance_en.htm?Date=20070425 scroll down to topic "Homophobia in Europe" on right hand side section "Today's topic".

(4) Last two resolutions of the European Parliament on homophobia in Europe:

- Resolution on the increase in racist and homophobic violence in Europe, 15 June 2006
www.ilga-europe.org/europe/news/european_parliament_adopts_new_resolution_on_racism_homophobia
- Resolution on homophobia in Europe, 18 January 2006
www.ilga-europe.org/europe/news/ilga_europe_welcomes_european_parliament_s_resolution_on_homophobia_in_europe

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