

**Društvo informacijski center**  
**LEGEBITRA**

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Mayor of Belgrade  
Dragan Djilas  
Dragoslava Jovanovića 2,  
11000 Beograd  
Serbia

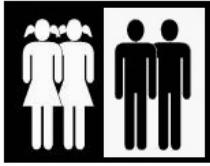
Ljubljana, 15.9.2009

With this letter we would like to express our strongest support to the organizers of Belgrade Pride that will take place on the 20th of September 2009 and in particular to the whole lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) community in Serbia. This year the LGBTIQ community all over the world proudly celebrates 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of pride parades, which have been in the past and still are essential in raising visibility and awareness of human rights of all individuals regardless of their sexual orientation and / or gender expression.

First Pride parade in Ljubljana was held in June 2001 as a result of a homophobic incident that happened after a Slovenian writer and gay activist Brane Mozetič, and his Canadian guest, poet Jean Paul Daoust, were not allowed to enter a café in the centre of Ljubljana. This incident spurred a spontaneous public protest – which became the first LGBT Pride parade in Slovenia. The protest got a wide public support and one of its most important supporters was the mayor of Ljubljana at that time, Ms. Vika Potočnik. With her support she clearly stated that discrimination based on sexual orientation would not be tolerated in Ljubljana. From there on in all mayors of Ljubljana have been honorary sponsors of Ljubljana Prides and thus helped to bring the message to the public – that Ljubljana strives to be a city with zero tolerance towards discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation.

Moreover, after the homophobic attacks that happened this year during the Pride parade week in Ljubljana, the mayor of Ljubljana, Mr. Zoran Jankovič, was one of the first to come to the scene of the crime to express his support to the LGBTIQ community. He also attended the press conference the following day together with LGBTIQ activists and very openly condemned the attack.

One of the honorary sponsors of 2009 Ljubljana Pride was also Slovenian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of Council of Europe Mr. Samuel Žbogar. The Council of Europe is an institution that seeks to develop throughout Europe common and democratic principles based on the European Convention on Human Rights and other reference texts on the protection of individuals. Thus the patronage of the Chairman of Ministers was of great importance for the LGBTIQ community in Slovenia and other member states of the Council of Europe.



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A reminder of shameful events from 2001 when the first attempt at a pride parade in Belgrade was brutally shut down by the members of violently homophobic public, the situation is now hopefully changed as we believe that Serbia, one of the candidates in the EU Accession Process, will fully endorse EU recommendations about the equality of its citizens, which also includes LGBTIQ community.

With this in mind, we hope and trust that the Belgrade Pride will be given full support that it needs from the City of Belgrade as well as the state. This will send a clear message to the public and to the world that Serbia is a country that actively endorses democratic principles based on the European Convention on Human Rights.

Sincerely,

*Simon Maljevac, Društvo informacijski center LEGEBITRA*

*Petra Salaj, Društvo Parada Ponosa*

*Nataša Sukič, ŠKUC LL*

*Andrej Habjan, Društvo DIH*