

Dear Sir/Madam,

Appeal to Mayors of European cities “On freedom of assembly and expression for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people”

I am writing on behalf of ILGA-Europe, the European Region of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) asking you to support our campaign and sign an appeal by Mayors of European cities.

ILGA-Europe works towards equality and human rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people at European level. As you most probably know, during the past few years the freedom of assembly and expression for LGBT people has been seriously compromised and/or violated in a number of European cities where peaceful and public demonstrations and pride events by LGBT people and their supporters were banned and participants of these events experienced humiliation, abuse and even violence.

Serious concerns regarding the violations of the right to freedom of assembly and expression for LGBT people have been expressed by various international intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations such as the European Union, the Council of Europe, the Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and many others.

Many Mayors of European Cities have also expressed their concerns and called on their colleagues in other European cities to ensure LGBT residents and guests of their cities fully enjoy the rights to freedom of assembly and expression.

On 28 March 2007, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, which is one of the main European forums for the representatives of local and regional authorities, adopted a Resolution on freedom of assembly and expression for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgendered persons+in which it %strongly condemns violations of the right to freedom of assembly and expression for LGBT people and draws a number of guidelines and practical recommendations for the local authorities on how to prevent such violations and ensure the rights to freedom of assembly and expression are enjoyed by all irrespective of sexual orientation and/or gender identity+.¹

¹ The resolution is available on the website of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities: <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1099699&BackColorInternet=e0cee1&BackColorIntranet=e0cee1&BackColorLogged=FFC679>

ILGA-Europe has been working on this issue by providing our members as well as organisers of LGBT demonstrations and pride events across Europe with information and knowledge on the observation and monitoring of human rights violations and the use of such evidence during litigations. Most notably, we published two practical documents: Handbook of Observations of Pride Marches and Toolkit for Pride Organising in a Hostile Environment. We also compiled detailed accounts on violations of LGBT peoples rights to freedom of assembly and expression in a number of countries and raised the issues with various European organisations and their institutions.²

ILGA-Europe is seriously concerned that despite a wide international and European condemnation of bans on pride events and other public demonstrations by LGBT people and their supporters, some Mayors and local authorities in Europe continue to discriminate and ban or restrict the rights of freedom of assembly and expression for LGBT people. That is why we are appealing to all Mayors of European cities. We sincerely hope that you will support our campaign and sign it.

We would appreciate it if you would join and sign our appeal **by 30 April 2008**.

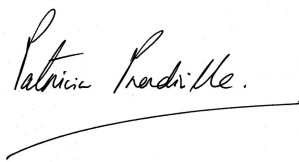
You can confirm your signature by sending a confirmation letter or e-mail to:

Juris Lavrikovs
ILGA-Europe's Information and Communications Officer
juris@ilga-europe.org

We also encourage the signatories to provide their individual messages which will be displayed on our campaign website and available to our members and the media.

Thanking you in advance for your solidarity and support!

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Patricia Prendiville". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line that extends to the right.

Patricia Prendiville
Executive Director of ILGA-Europe

² All these documents are available on our website: www.ilga-europe.org