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Message of Support

Pride organisers face difficulties across Eastern Europe. In the last year there have been attacks on the rights of lesbians and gay men in Eastern Europe with violence at, and/or bans on, Gay Pride events in Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Moldova and Romania.

I have already, and continue, to condemn all these and assert the basic human and civil right of gay men and lesbians to peacefully demonstrate. Homophobia and prejudice against lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) people remains strong, and the positive impact of high profile Gay Pride marches cannot be underestimated.

London is proud to host the annual Pride Parade and Rally and efforts by my administration reflect a positive and progressive attitude towards London's LGBT community through the provision of high profile cultural events, strategic policies, community engagement and challenges to discrimination. Above all we stand for a city where everybody can be themselves, where different communities come to understand and learn from one another and where there is no place for bigotry, homophobia, racism or any other form of discrimination.

The European Parliament is clear that member states must 'ensure that LGBT people are protected from homophobic hate speech and violence' and be treated with 'respect, dignity and protection'. Governments have a duty to take all steps to protect citizens from violence and ensure that demonstrators are able to exercise their right to peaceful protest. If extremist groups threaten freedom of assembly the authorities should take decisive action against them. I urge all European states to stand up to their national, European and international human rights obligations.



Ken Livingstone
Mayor of London